The road overtraveled
European tourism is an issue for locals and visitors alike
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Black beyond borders
A student journalist explores a question of race in Spain
page 6
The world is a bit crazy. The humans are having constant disagreements and arguments. There are so many different issues that are causing conflicts and debates these days. It is happening in the U.S., in Europe, in Spain, everywhere! I am sure that you have some of these topics in mind right now. Problems, struggles, clashes, battles and conflicts—not to mention politics—or maybe yes. And with all of this going on, am I going to study abroad? Am I going to stay for months in a different continent, country, and culture? Will those people be different, strange, or weird? What will they think about me? And what will I think about them? Do they know about the U.S. and our issues? And, by the way, what do I know about that country, those people, and their political, social, or economic issues? The answer is yes, study abroad! You have to see and experience it with your own eyes and perspective.

Well, our viewpoint and the experience of thousands of FSU students is that knowing other cultures, other languages, and other types of people helps our brains and our reasoning to be ready to listen and understand other points of view. These experiences will make us see the “big picture” and put the problems and situations into perspective. We will be ready to compare and express opinions based on this variety of new inputs that we will have acquired in our way of thinking and viewing of the world.

And this issue of Nomadic Noles reflects this train of thought. We researched, studied, and experienced the U.S.’s, Europe’s and Spain’s political and social controversial issues. We traveled to places of great interest and that are causing big discord, we debated and dialogued, we heard the opinions of locals, American citizens, Europeans, and people from everywhere. And with all of those ideas, words, and comments, we created and forged our own opinions and explanations. We all “traveled” from the discomfort of the polemics and disputes, to the ease of forming opinions through the journeys, through the guided and taught activities, and during our visits to places of interest.

In the end, no one knows all the answers, and no one can tell you what to think. But we can all give opinions and listen to other voices. And with that, we are creating a common knowledge that sometimes may get close to common sense.
By Melissa Kindma

With the arm of her daughter, Gemma Pascual, and in the other, Ángeles Domínguez-Barberá shuffles her way through the outdoor tables of Café Lavin as she heads to a quieter place. She greets everyone around her with a warm smile, a silent message of connection and kindness. Her nails, painted an iridescent white, subtly glisten in the sun.

At 97 years old, she clearly still takes pride in the way she looks. She wears a brown and white, patterned blouse, tastefully accented with gold jewelry.

“I made this shirt many years ago and it’s still perfect,” Ángeles, who goes by Angelita, says.

Her clothes are a testament to her youthful spirit, unchallenged by time. She became a skilled seamstress after the Spanish Civil War. She says that before the war, her family was one of the most important families in Spain and one of the wealthiest in all of Europe. They developed a packaging company that became the first leading producer of burlap sacks during World War I. The sacks were used to carry loads of potatoes and other items, edible and not, across the continent.

However, everything changed for Angelita when her father and her brother, Pepé, were kidnapped in 1938.

The introduction of the Second Spanish Republic gave rise to the Communist Party of Spain, a coalition of leftist political parties, who were the elected opposition to the then-government before the conflict began.

They fought against the right-wing Nationalists with fervor in what came to be known as the Spanish Civil War, which lasted from 1936 to 1939. During the war, the political climate in Spain was thick with tension, pitting neighbor against neighbor. The Communist Party of Spain was notorious for invading Spanish cities, burning churches, and murdering foreign members of important nationalist parties.

Angelita’s family was one of those targeted, belonging to a political party known as “El Partido Popular” (translated to mean “The People’s Party”). When her father and brother were taken to jail to be killed, she did everything she could to save them. She prayed to God and beseeched her closest friend, “Please help them. They are going to die.”

Her friend, the daughter of an important Communist leader, pleaded with her own father to release Angelita’s family from jail. Against all odds, they were freed, but not without a cost. The Communist Party of Spain took everything familiar to them — their home, their business, their livelihood. For Angelita, it marked the beginning of a life that was unrecognizable in comparison to her first 16 years.

To avoid further conflict, Angelita and her family took refuge in a small town south of Valencia, called El Trinquet de Pelayo. It was there. They had to start from nothing… [but] their love flowed into everything; the family, the restaurant, […] it was relaxed. They wanted to last their whole lives together.”

While recording the interview for this article, Angelita caught a glimpse of herself in the small screen of the cell phone.

“I look so small,” she said as she adjusted her position. She inched forward on the simple, black couch and continued to muse about her life in Valencia, about her family, about Gemma.

As she spoke, her eyes sparkled with pride—a true Valencian through and through. There is nothing small about this incredible woman’s spirit nor the powerful stories she eagerly shares.

Her life is a reminder of a great responsibility to not only participate in history, but to preserve it, to share it—and for younger generations, to simply listen.

Doña Angelita
la historia de una Valenciana

The bittersweet tale of a woman with nearly a century’s worth of memories

Angelita Domínguez-Barberá and her daughter, Gemma Pascual.

*Photo by Savannah Tindall*
What's it like to be black in Spain?

African-Americans share their experiences interacting with Afro-Spaniards in Valencia

By Kamari Pless

As I counted through the heap of clothes—jeans, skirts, tops, T-shirts, shoes (most of which are heels) and dresses—it was evident that I over-packed. On suitcase number three, it was time to address the anxiety at hand. So many questions sprinted across my mind: Are you ready for this? Will you make any friends? Most importantly; How will you dress? How will others react? Will you adjust to the language? What would it be like for a black girl in Spain? Africans and Afro-Spaniards in Valencia. While enjoying a cafe con leche, she realizes that the Afro-Spaniard presence she expects to see is lacking. "I did meet one girl—she was from Nigeria and played soccer in a lower division," Davis says. "I met one guy from Senegal, and he was in Valencia to study. Those are the only two black people that I came across." Outside of her teammates, Davis rarely interacted with other black people when living in Valencia. Davis was a foreign exchange student in Valencia, until fall 2019, when she was traded to an Italian team (Costa Masnaga). However, Davis says that she did not get much exposure to the black community while living in Valencia. "I did meet one girl—she was from Nigeria and played soccer in a lower division," Davis says. "I met one guy from Senegal, and he was in Valencia to study. Those are the only two black people that I came across." Outside of her teammates, Davis rarely interacted with other black people when living in Valencia. Valencia is Spain’s third largest city. Part of its history includes the assimilation of Africans, Afro-Spanish or Afro-Spaniards, into the Spanish culture. These terms are easily understood by some. Davis is all too familiar with inclusive cultures. "Coming from New Orleans, we are Creole," she says with pride. "I know the Spanish had slaves and Afro-Spaniard is that mix, like Creole." Likewise, Lewis—who studied in the Valencia program—has some "mixed feelings" about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some "mixed feelings" about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that." Hermano says he has some “mixed feelings” about his black peers. "Well, unlike in GB (United Kingdom) or France, blacks here in Spain are still in hiding. It's a bit complex when it comes to setting up entertainment businesses or things like that."
I feel valued, I feel like I'm doing a good job, and my students affirm that I run my class pretty well. I just enjoy it.”

— Joe Calhoun
The road overtraveled

Valencia combats the tide of overtourism

By Ericka Rivera

F or many, the chance to travel to Europe and immerse themselves in a culture so much older and more developed than one’s own has become a lopsided picture, with Europe—long considered the growing middle class in developing countries like China, India, and Brazil means there are suddenly billions of people with disposable income. The dispersion of this new, huge tourist population is spread unevenly as they flock toward travel meccas such as Paris, New York, Venice, and Barcelona.

A perfect storm

This sudden surge in mass international tourism is caused by a perfect storm of factors. Primarily, the convenience and economic growth of the internet has increased, meaning travelers can arrive cheaper and faster than before. Websites such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Airbnb have increased awareness of iconic, far-away destinations. Websites like Google have increased attention of crowd-weary tourists, the natural environment and cultural treasures are also threatened by pollution, overuse, disrespectful visitors, or neglect from the host city’s overpowered tourism board. These problems are often self-inflicted by residents of cities, in June 2019 "The model of overtourism is copied from one city to the other. Barcelona is overcrowded, and every year more tourists visit. As a result, the recent generations of millennials and Gen Z have expressed more interest in travel than their parents or grandparents ever did. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, international travel has become a lopsided picture, with Europe- and immerse themselves in a culture so much older and more developed than one’s own. According to Dr. Joe Calhoun, who taught at FSU Valencia many times, "With economic growth comes spending money, says Dr. Jeff Overby, professor of marketing and international business and director of the Center for International Business at Belmont University. "And that's where you really see the huge difference in the number of tourists coming from what were traditionally developing countries like China, India, and Brazil means there are suddenly billions of people with disposable income. The dispersion of this new, huge tourist population is spread unevenly as they flock toward travel meccas such as Paris, New York, Venice, and Barcelona. Valencia combats the tide of overtourism

By Ericka Rivera

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, international travel has become a lopsided picture, with European countries receiving the grunt of international arrivals. Travel has become cheaper, more appealing, and more convenient than ever, spurring a travel boom that has left European countries’ infrastructures in overdrive. Navigating crowded museums, eating at overpriced restaurants, deal with increasingly overtaxed service workers, and fight with hundreds of other tourists to take the perfect picture of the same thing. According to Dr. Joe Calhoun, who taught at FSU Valencia many times, "With economic growth comes spending money, says Dr. Jeff Overby, professor of marketing and international business and director of the Center for International Business at Belmont University. "And that’s where you really see the huge difference in the number of tourists coming from what were traditionally developing countries like China, India, and Brazil means there are suddenly billions of people with disposable income. The dispersion of this new, huge tourist population is spread unevenly as they flock toward travel meccas such as Paris, New York, Venice, and Barcelona.

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Assistant Professor Amy Huber’s students in her Sketching in the City course leave their chairs behind to use Valencia as the ultimate classroom

By Emily Voytecek

When students decide to study at FSU Valencia, they are preparing for an experience of a lifetime. Students buzz over what they are going to eat, where they will travel over the weekend, and which photos to post to Instagram. But left out of this excitement is an important aspect of study abroad: the classes. Students might assume that because they are taking FSU courses, classes will be the same as in Tallahassee. However, most students will also be able to look forward to exciting classes that are more than long lectures.

At FSU Valencia, professors develop curricula to ensure that students experience the city while taking the course. Students can learn from the opportunities the city provides, such as festivals, museums, and historical ruins. Classes are carefully tailored to ensure that students can learn from these opportunities in a way that complements course work.

“It does no good to have a student come 4,000 miles and keep that student in a classroom,” says William “B.J.” Biringer, a professor in residence at FSU Valencia.

Biringer, having worked with FSU Valencia for 19 years, knows the benefits of taking students outside the classroom, and even Tallahassee-based faculty members who are new to Valencia take their classes on field trips.

For example, in summer 2019, during her first time teaching in Valencia, Professor-in-residence William “B.J.” Biringer, an assistant professor of interior design on the Tallahassee campus, decided to take students outside the classroom to “use the city as a canvas,” Huber says. Because of his experience, Biringer has devised a specific approach to teaching students while abroad, which revolves around Valencia itself. He takes the students out on “field work” to gain first-hand experience of the materials they are studying. For instance, in summer 2019, Biringer discussed the presence of the Roman empire in Spain, with his Spain: Culture and Civilization course.

In stead of looking at pictures of artifacts on a computer screen, he took the students to museums such as L’Almoína to see Roman ruins in real life. L’Almoína features architectural ruins left behind by the Romans, such as roads and communal baths. Biringer believes that seeing these historical remains up close has an influential impact on students.

“You can interact with it, and I think that makes a world of difference,” Biringer says. “When you’re here looking at historical venues and historical monuments in a city like Valencia, it makes an impact on the mind that is looking to fill itself with culture.”

A student in Biringer’s Spain: Culture and Civilization course, Gabby Gao, a junior international affairs major, enjoyed the frequent excursions. “Not all traditional classes have so much better because we can talk and learn about something and then go out and see it and experience it first-hand,” Gao says. Besides L’Almoína, the class visited Valencia’s city hall and Spain’s National Ceramics Museum, also located in Valencia.

Biringer’s academic and life experiences in Valencia means he has inside knowledge about important Valencian cultural activities that take place outside museums. Biringer is heavily involved with the Valencian Fallas festival and uses his status as vice president in his local Fallas association to give the students an inside look at preparations for the festival.

The Fallas festival, a centuries old tradition, takes place annually in Valencia and is recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The springtime festival has evolved into a collection of community Fallas associations building giant sculptures that are works of art, all to be eventually burned in the spring alongside music and festivities celebrating Valencian culture.

Because the Fallas festival is so important to Valencian culture, Biringer has established an entire course devoted to it. Participation in the course allows students to get a full appreciation and understanding of the festival and the effort required to create it every year.

Students get a taste of all aspects, including “the artistic point of view, how the monuments are built, the portion of paper architecture and the actual festival,” Biringer says. “We study the selection process for the women of being on the city court, how the selected students have to learn in each individual commission, and how contracts are handed out to the providers. We also study memberships, the service awards, and how the money is generated to pull off this festival, and how we raise money.”

By Emily Voytecek

Professor-in-residence William “B.J.” Biringer explains an assignment before taking students on a city tour.

“Professor Huber found a way to enhance my educational experience in Valencia by allowing our class to venture outside of the classroom to many different museums,” says Sarah Reimer, a sophomore nursing student. “She created an interesting way to incorporate outside activities within the course to make it a class different than any other I’ve taken, creating an amazing and unique academic and cultural experience.”

By teaching with an emphasis on culture, Biringer and Huber help students studying abroad return to Tallahassee with an in-depth understanding of class materials. Students take in the history of Valencia through the city itself, by engaging in cultural activities and exploring Valencia’s history in museums. Both tools equip students with the skills to engage in cultural activities and explore Valencia, as opposed to a textbook, and this approach allows students to interact with the smaller details of Valencia.

“Not a traditional class, but so much more knowledge about how the festival is designed and developed by Valencians.”

Meanwhile, Huber, despite not having 20 years of experience in Valencia to rely on, came prepared. Having studied abroad in college herself, she already knew she wanted to get the students into the city and began planning locations last spring to “align that with the learning topics and see where those best fits were.”

Huber taught two courses in Valencia in summer 2019: Sketching in the City, as well as Design and Human Experience. Both classes left the classroom every day to explore Valencia’s visiting museums and cultural sites. For Sketching in the City, she took students out to examine small details, with sketch sites including “urban landscapes and fountains,” Huber says. For Design and Human Experience, students focused on larger Valencian cultural events and Huber focusing on smaller artistic details, students get the same benefits, such as gaining academic knowledge through irreplaceable cultural experiences.

Caroline Bing, a student in the Sketching in the City class, drew this image of Italian gelato for an assignment.

All of these aspects are directly illustrated with examples taken from his Fallas association, and this proximity to the logistics allows the students to gain more knowledge about how the festival is designed and developed by Valencians.

“Ask me about my educational experience.”

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“Aside from all the cultural experiences, there are so many opportunities to sketch a range of different architectural styles,” Huber says. “Tallahassee doesn’t have that wide variety. We have
**Get lost, to find yourself**

Students studying abroad learn about their identity in a foreign environment

By Emma Jo McAuliffe

T

here are few moments in life more frightening than leaving behind everything you have ever known, even if you know you will eventually return. Florida State University students who study abroad start that process by throwing an overwhelming suitcase onto the airport conveyor belt, embracing their dazed dream of exploration, without really knowing what they will find along the way.

FSU student Jennifer Walker studied in Valencia during the summer of 2019. Light brown curls hang over half of her face as she thinks back to her mindset before leaving for Spain.

“I never could commit—it is scary,” she says. “I knew I was going to go alone because none of my friends wanted to study abroad.”

This potentially life-altering decision to study in a foreign country becomes a thrilling-yet-distressing reality for many FSU students. They leave their friends, family, and country to discover more of the world and more of themselves.

A person’s identity is often interwoven with the communities they are part of—from religious groups and political affiliations to sexuality and their major. Without the comfort and expectations of these communities, their true selves are forced to the surface and have to be confronted in the chaos of the unknown.

“My whole life I have been labeled as the shy quiet person,” Walker says. “Sometimes I think I accidentally play into that because I think people don’t expect me to go to first, to raise my hand and answer the question, so I’m not going to do something they don’t expect.”

Here, no one has those expectations of me. They don’t know me.

Away from any previously established presence, Walker and students like her are able to push themselves to come into their own.

“When I was in Valencia I had to actively seek out the social connection,” Walker says. “I have to talk to random new people and talk to people in class and I like it. I don’t know what I was afraid of.”

Dr. Lauren Schoenberger is fully aware of that fear students can experience in these situations. She is the communications director for FSU’s International Programs and studied abroad in London when she was in college. She says she felt free there to learn who she was and begin to accept her identity as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

“Going to school in the United States, you still might know people who know your parents. You’re still in this mindset of how you’ve always been,” Schoenberger says. “Even going to school far from home you’re still going to have a connection, you’re probably going to feel comfortable to some sense.”

After Schoenberger pushed herself beyond the security of her communities, she felt free enough to begin embracing her sexuality and confidence. Those newfound insights inspired her to write her dissertation on LGBTQ+ identity in the States, even if it is far from your home. You’re still comfortable with the language, the money, the culture, the way of life,” Schoenberger says. “I really think it [takes] removing yourself completely from your comfort zone in order to be comfortable with yourself. I really think it is to be able to free yourself.”

In her role with IP, she established an LGBTQ+ training program and safe space for all of FSU’s overseas programs that has helped many students. Schoenberger’s work has influenced the experience of many students, including Andrew Barone, a senior at FSU who decided to study abroad in hopes of not only improving his Spanish but also improving himself.

“I feel like there’s always room to grow. Especially immersing yourself in a completely different culture, a different language,” Barone says. “Small silver hoops line both of his ears, and piercing blue eyes declare his unapologetic confidence.

“One of my friends, who is also a member of the LGBTQ+ community was studying abroad in Madrid and he told me how much he has grown and expanded as a person,” he says. “I thought, ‘I want to do this for myself.’”

Before his arrival in Valencia, Barone expressed concerns of not being able to make friends because of who he is fiercely. Is. After meeting the students who would be his roommates during the summer of 2019, there was a moment when it seemed his fear was coming true.

One roommate said to Barone upon first meeting, “I’ve never really met someone like you before.” Barone responded, “Like what?”

Jennifer Walker works on her journal in a garden near FSU’s Gold Study Center in Valencia.

Photo by Emma Jo McAuliffe

Andrew Barone (left) went to Valencia wanting to learn more about himself.

Scott Erikson (bottom left) and David Atkins both say meeting new people in Valencia was their goal.

Photos by Emma Jo McAuliffe

The roommate then made a slight grimace and motioned both hands up and down the length of Barone’s torso, palms down with fingers partially spread out, and said, “This.”

After that initial encounter, Barone made a decision that surprised himself. He decided to spend time teaching his roommates more about gay culture.

“If I am not going to do it, who is?” Barone says. “And if I don’t do it, how are they going to change? How are they going to learn? And if I burn bridges, they are going to look even more negatively on my community.”

At the end of the first summer semester, Barone said he and his roommates grew to better understand each other.

“They called me their bro and their dude. You know, heterosexual things,” Barone says with a room-filling laugh.

Looking back over his time in Valencia, Barone says he is in awe of how much not only he but also everyone around him has grown: “90 days seem like so little time, but there’s so much expansion in those days.”

FSU’s Valencia campus has a way of connecting everyone, of getting them to release the boundaries they once felt. One community at FSU that is seen as remaining in self-appointed silos is Greek life. Scott Erikson and David Atkins are members of Florida State’s Inter-Fraternity Council, and they both admit that one reason they came to Valencia was to get off the so-called island that students can place themselves on.

“I didn’t know anyone when I signed up to study abroad,” Erikson says. “I wanted to meet new people.”

Erikson and Atkins say their study experience was amazing and enlightening, as they got to know new people they likely would never see around campus, denying them any opportunities to meet.

“We love our roommates Matt and Trevor, but we have such different lives in Tallahassee we would probably never see each other,” Atkins says.
Tamara Garcia found herself drawn to her job with Florida State University’s Valencia study abroad program because of a simple reason: a love of the English language. Garcia is FSU Valencia’s faculty service coordinator, and as a college student at the University of Valencia, she majored in English language and literature and studied abroad in England. Those experiences left her with a desire to use English regularly in her everyday life. “I always enjoyed and loved English,” Garcia says. “I’ve always dreamed of being able to do it and work in something that was maybe studying English. It’s not always easy to find jobs [in Valencia] working in English instead of Spanish.”

Garcia’s role with FSU Valencia allows her to wear many different hats. For example, Garcia spends time coordinating with International Programs in Tallahassee, helping the Valencia campus keep the academics in order; she guides Valencia students through the drop-add process; works with Valencia’s Dean and Program Director Ignacio Messana to pick the courses to offer each semester; and ensures that faculty members have the resources and information they need to keep classes running smoothly. Messana appreciates Garcia’s efforts and her contributions to the Valencia team. “Tamara is always ready to help a student or a faculty member,” he says. “She is very professional and at the same time very personal, if the situation requires so. When you leave her desk, you always feel better than when you arrived.”

All of this administrative work can be challenging, Garcia says, but the most difficult part is “to keep up with my own expectations about myself sometimes.” While striving to keep her part of the process running smoothly, Garcia admits that the hardest time period in her job is during the summer session. The numbers of faculty and students traveling to Valencia increase, “and everything gets a lot more hectic.”

“I don’t get bored in my job,” Garcia says. “I really love my job, and it gave me the opportunity to meet people that I wouldn’t have met otherwise.”

FSU music Professor Larry Gerber is one of those people. He has taught in Valencia’s study abroad program many times, and he says an important feature in the program’s success is the availability of staff to assist students and faculty. “Tamara is key to the success of faculty programs and class visits outside the FSU buildings,” he says. “Here are just a few words in a litany of praise I have for my colleague, Tamara Garcia: helpful, caring, generous, perceptive, affable, and wonderful. I cannot imagine Tamara without a smile, on her face, or mine.”

Though Garcia spends most her time working alongside the program’s faculty members, her favorite part of the job comes from interacting with the students. “I like to see the perspective of the students of my town; it’s like seeing your own town but with different eyes, exciting new eyes,” she says. And Garcia knows Valencia very well. She grew up in the city, and both of her parents are from the region as well. As a Valencian, Garcia enjoys what the city has to offer. “I love a nice walk on the beach in the afternoon just when the sun is coming down,” she says, adding that typical Valencian food is a treat as well. “I wouldn’t be a good Valencian if I didn’t say paella, but it has to be the seafood one for me.”

The family tradition of raising children in the birthplace of paella continues, as Garcia is now raising her own son, 1-year-old Diego. Garcia admits to gaining a new perspective on studying abroad once she became a mother. “I did it myself when I was 19, when I went to England,” Garcia says. “I didn’t see any problems or danger. Now I understand my dad.”

Despite her new understanding, Garcia still encourages students to study abroad, based partly on her own experience. “Studying abroad really opened my eyes and gave me different perspectives of life,” she says. “I made friends from all over the world that still to this day I am friends with.”

Garcia also feels comfortable with her recommendation based on what she sees every day at FSU Valencia. The program is prepared to support students, she points out, taking care of everything from academics to students’ health. “We are there to help you out whether you feel homesick or if you feel sick or are having an issue,” Garcia says. “So, on that side, I would really have peace of mind knowing my kid is well and taken care of.”

Garcia wishes more students could take part in studying abroad: “It’s going to be such an experience and you’re going to make friends forever,” she says.

She gives her advice with confidence, due to the involvement Garcia has with FSU Valencia and the fact that she studied abroad herself. She knows the value of study abroad, and she hopes one day to see those benefits through her son’s perspective. “I would definitely love for Diego to experience when he is older the living abroad experience as I did,” she says. “I truly think that it is so eye opening, and life changing.”

The staff, faculty members, and students at FSU Valencia are certainly better off thanks to Garcia living up to her own words.

By Emily Voytecek

“Studying abroad really opened my eyes and gave me different perspectives of life. I made friends from all over the world that still to this day I am friends with.”

— Tamara Garcia

Tamara Garcia withFSU Professor Larry Gerber, who says she is “key to the success” of FSU Valencia.

All office photos courtesy of FSU Valencia

Top and left: Tamara Garcia and her son Diego, now 1 year old.

Photos courtesy of Tamara Garcia

Tamara Garcia gives academic advice to FSU student J.P. Burke.
By Caroline Murkey

The flamenco dance began with hands clapping and feet tapping. Gradually, a man began accompanying the woman dancing with song, while another played intricate music on a Spanish guitar. The dancer twirled with the clapping, tapping, singing, and guitar playing. As the tempo quickened, the dancer moved in time. Each loud slam of her foot was punctuated with a resounding “Ole!” from her companions on stage. Her dress mesmerized onlookers as she threw it around the floor with pointed aggression. Paula Acosta, cultural program coordinator at FSU Valencia, made this experience possible for students. It is her job to plan trips and activities for students and the cultural part of the program, but also to cooperating with the team she works with, creating a positive work environment,” says Alicia Martinez, associate director of FSU Valencia. When planning trips, Acosta considers the way students might benefit from places such as Peñíscola, a coastal town in eastern Spain, or the Bioparc, a zoo in the Netherlands. “I’m really interested in sustainable, eco-tourism,” she says. Her degree, her active lifestyle, and her natural ability to connect with people from all walks of life are a perfect fit for her role as cultural program coordinator at FSU Valencia. “I enjoy what I do. I like planning…I like traveling, I like talking to people—but also the work environment is good,” Acosta says. During her two years as cultural program coordinator, Acosta has planned many trips, taking care of the itineraries and working with people in the other cities to pull off everything. For example, the Madrid trip usually involves a day trip to the Valley of the Fallen and Segovia, all planned carefully by Acosta, as she takes care of museum entrance fees and other necessary details. Acosta also pioneered a trip to a new destination for FSU Valencia, the island of Mallorca, off the coast of Spain. That journey took place during the first summer session of 2019. Due to not having visited the spot before, FSU had no previous relationship with businesses, hotels, or tour guides in the area. Most of the research and planning fell on Acosta’s desk, but she happily embraced the challenge. Even though she was a bit nervous with the logistics of completing such a daunting task, students appreciated her efforts. “I loved the Mallorca trip,” says Joshua Meinert, a program assistant. “The activities were enjoyable and culturally relevant.”

In addition to major, program-wide weekend trips, Acosta also plans weekly student excursions. Acosta describes her job in three words, “...challenging, fun, and demanding...” She says that even though some parts of the job can be stressful and overwhelming, knowing that she can be successful in planning trips that students and faculty enjoy keeps her motivated. “I think that is the most rewarding part—at the end knowing that I can manage and figure it out [...] It would be a lot harder to do my job without the FSU team surrounding me,” Acosta says. “Even though it is a small team of people, we all rely on one another to get our jobs done.” Acosta is dedicated to organizing experiences that students will remember for the rest of their lives. With her direction, students feel supported in their endeavors outside the classroom. From advising students what to do if their wallet is stolen to suggesting the best Mediterranean restaurant in Valencia, students have a knowledgeable insider as soon as they arrive in Spain. “Paula has not only been a wonderful co-worker,” Meinert says, “but has also become a dear friend. Her English, knowledge of the city, and organization skills make her an irreplaceable asset to the team.” Acosta suggests studying abroad to all students. “Every time you go abroad, you learn something new about yourself. You gain confidence and that’s huge,” Acosta says. “Don’t hesitate. Do it [...] It really changes the way you think about yourself and the world around you.”

From advising students what to do if their wallet is stolen to suggesting the best Mediterranean restaurant in Valencia, students have a knowledgeable insider as soon as they arrive in Spain.

FSU’s insider on Spain’s sites

Cultural Program Coordinator Paula Acosta knows the ins and outs of Spain so she can plan events and excursions for FSU students.

Paula works very diligently, not only in fulfilling her daily tasks in assisting students and the cultural part of the program, but also in cooperating with the team she works with, creating a positive work environment. — Alicia Martinez

associate director of FSU Valencia

All photos courtesy of Paula Acosta

Top: Paula Acosta in Porto, Portugal.
Above: Acosta with her friend Isabel Pico Mak.
Left: Acosta enjoying her time in the Spanish Pyrenees, located in the northern area of Spain.
“This is where philosophy and real life come together.”
— Tracie Mahaffey

I
n the wake of the MeToo movement, many students and others are wrestling with the ethics of consent in sexual situations. Fortunately, there’s a course that can help them unpack the dynamics of consent in such circumstances: “Yeses and Noes: The Ethics of Consent.”

The course was offered at FSU Valencia in the 2019 Summer II session and is offered on the Tallahassee campus during the regular academic year. On both campuses, it is taught by Dr. Tracie Mahaffey, an associate teaching professor and the director of undergraduate studies in FSU’s philosophy department. Originally, Mahaffey proposed and planned a course that would focus on the ethics of consent in medical, sexual, and professional, or sexually intimate situations.

While Mahaffey has taught the course on FSU’s main campus, teaching the course in Valencia adds a fresh element, allowing her students to reflect on how they can deal with cross-cultural dynamics of consent while studying in another country.

“I think it’s where philosophy and real life come together,” Mahaffey says. So she revised the course plan to focus heavily on sexual consent and how it affects college students today.

“Noes and Yeses: The Ethics of Consent” would focus on the ethics of consent in medical, sexual, and professional situations. On both campuses, it is taught by Dr. Tracie Mahaffey, an associate teaching professor and the director of undergraduate studies in FSU’s philosophy department.

Originally, Mahaffey proposed and planned a course that would focus on the ethics of consent in medical, sexual, and professional situations—whether platonic, professional, or sexually intimate.

When we consent to something, we consent under a certain condition. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, many students and others are wrestling with the ethics of consent in sexual situations. Fortunately, there’s a course that can help them unpack the dynamics of consent in such circumstances: “Yeses and Noes: The Ethics of Consent.”

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“This is where philosophy and real life come together.”
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[Image: Tracie Mahaffey holds a group discussion with her students in the Summer 2019 Ethics of Consent course offered in Valencia.]

“Consent has this moral magic to it,” Mahaffey says. “You take something that the very same action is not OK, and when you consent to it, that action becomes OK—simply because you said yes.”

Mahaffey unpacks this point by explaining the four main components of consent: competence, information disclosure, voluntariness, and intention.

“You have to be competent,” she says. “You have to have enough information to make the decision that you’re making. Your decision has to be voluntary—so you can’t be compelled or coerced or manipulated.”

“Then the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke in 2017. This is where philosophy and real life come together,” Mahaffey says. She revised the course plan to focus heavily on sexual consent and how it affects college students today.

“[Mahaffey] has made an effort to talk about the laws and current events in Spain that show you this is not only a problem in the United States, but it’s a problem globally,” says Sydney Dawson, one of Mahaffey’s students in Valencia in 2019.

For example, one of the hot topics discussed in their class was the significance of the case of La Manada, or “The Wolf Pack,” case in Spain.

“In July 2016, during a weekend festival in Pamplona commonly known as “the running of the bulls,” an 18-year-old woman reported that she had been raped by five men. The woman told police that she was going to her car to sleep, and on her way there was accompanied by a group of men whom she had just met. She said the men pushed her into a doorway of a building, where they raped her and filmed the assault on their cell phones, after which they left her there and stole her cellphone.

The men, all from Seville, later shared the video of the attack in a WhatsApp group called La Manada. Police studied the footage and reported that because the woman, who had eyes closed during the assault, maintained a “passive and neutral” attitude and did not attempt to fight back, it could not be regarded as rape.

Mahaffey explains that, under Spanish law, for a crime to be regarded as rape, the attacker must have engaged in explicit use of force. Because of this requirement, the men were originally found guilty of “sexual abuse,” which carries a much shorter prison sentence than does rape.

However, on June 21, 2019, after major uproar from the public since the original verdict, Spain’s Supreme Court unanimously voted to overturn the earlier ruling and, instead, the men were convicted of rape. Each man was sentenced to 15 years for the rape, and one man, a military police officer, was sentenced to an additional two years for stealing the woman’s cellphone.

“It opened my eyes to how Spanish people deal with consent,” says Kory Rauter, another student in Mahaffey’s class. “It’s interesting because, like with personal space, they have very different rules, and what they view as consent might not be what we view as consent.”

Although there is some overlap in the way American and Spanish women react to the issue of consent, Spanish women have a way that they can create distance in their language, according to Mahaffey. Spanish women can use different pronouns and references to distance themselves verbally when they are setting boundaries.

For example, if a man makes unwanted advances to a woman that he has just met in a club, she could address him as “usted” instead of “tu.” In the Spanish language, if you don’t want to have a closer, more intimate relationship with someone, or if you want to keep the relationship more professional or formal, you would call that person “usted.” This pronoun immediately tells the person you are dealing with what your intentions are in various social situations, Mahaffey says.

In contrast, in the United States, women are more likely to resort to awkward pleasantry to avoid confrontation and to avoid being seen as mean or difficult. For example, let’s say a young woman walks into a club, and as she is making her way to the bar, a man walks toward her and positions himself behind her. With his arm stretched around her, she giggles, avoids eye contact, and makes polite, hesitant conversation in hopes of getting him to go away.

He, instead, perceives her smile as an invitation and places his hand on her hip. Still, not having said that she wants him to leave her alone, she shifts away, hoping to avoid confrontation.

Thinking she is playing hard to get, he persists with his unwanted advances. Then, a friend calls out to him from across the bar, giving the young woman a chance to quietly duck away into the sea of people.

Did this man have consent to touch the young woman’s body? What is consent? Through the course, Yeses and Noes: The Ethics of Consent, Mahaffey hopes to encourage her students to be comfortable in expressing their limitations and in making decisions with the thought process of “my decisions are representative of me” and to be more reflective moving forward with these choices.

“In class,” Dawson says, “We have discussed that we should feel empowered to say ‘That is not OK.’”
Marian Blat teaches Spanish at FSU Valencia, giving students the necessary speaking skills to communicate in their new environment

By Caroline Murkey

Language as a field of study inspires Blat, and she is currently working on transcribing and editing manuscripts from the 15th and 16th centuries for her doctoral degree. She says that seeing how language has changed over time is thought provoking for her. Blat says that being able to teach students about language balances out the stressful parts of the job.

“I love the language,” she says. “All the syntax, grammar, morphology, lexical, phonetics—everything.”

Blat studied language at the University of Valencia, and she was working on her Ph.D. while she taught two classes at Florida State University's Valencia campus: Elementary Spanish I and II. Blat describes her teaching style as “changing.” Originally, she focused on grammar, but now, Blat directs her teaching toward helping students navigate the streets and businesses of Valencia.

“At the beginning, maybe I was more focused on grammar but now… I’ve realized that students need to learn something that they can use,” Blat says.

Logan Foltz was a student of Blat’s in the Elementary Spanish II class in the summer of 2019. “She incorporates many interactive activities that allow the students to apply the Spanish they’re learning to life in Valencia,” says Foltz, who is majoring in interdisciplinary medical sciences at FSU.

One of the ways Blat helps her students to stay motivated and focused on the curriculum is through field trips and activities. One of trips she took students on was to a yoga class. At the studio, the students met with a yoga instructor who spoke only Spanish. The exercise was to help students better understand the parts of the body, and Blat wanted students to visualize the body parts as the instructor was saying them.

“She would say ‘move your right arm, move your right leg’ and then they might not know all the vocabulary but they understood most of it,” Blat says.

Blat also coordinates for students an activity similar to “speed dating.” “Basically, how this works is she puts people in pairs to talk about a specific topic in Spanish—then after about two to three minutes, she changes the pairs and the students rotate around the room,” Foltz says.

These activities combined with Blat’s teaching style help her students grasp the language, even in the short amount of time they are taking classes.

“My favorite part of class with Professor Blat is how incredibly quickly I’ve learned Spanish over the past few weeks,” says Caroline Vaverek, another student in Blat’s Elementary Spanish II class.

Blat herself has learned other languages, in addition to English. She is originally from an area just outside of Valencia, called Burjassot. She also lived for seven years in Bari, Italy, where she taught Spanish at the University of Bari. Although she admits that “there is no way to not miss Italy,” and she visits her friends there often, she always returns to Spain, especially so she can enjoy one of her favorite activities in Valencia: visiting the Mediterranean Sea.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s winter or summer, because the sea is always beautiful,” Blat says.

She also enjoys being with her friends—“I love just sharing and talking with them,” she says—going to the theater to see plays or a museum when she has free time. She also is careful with what she eats, saying even though she is not vegan, she prefers that kind of food.

Blat also enjoys exercise, but she had to take a break beginning in October 2018, when she had heart surgery to replace a valve. She recovered and her return to teaching for the Summer II session, “was almost therapeutic. I think that students can help you a lot.” Belén González, a friend and coworker of Blat’s in the FSU Valencia program, says she is happy when she works with Blat, who interacts well with others in the study centers.

“It’s really easy to work with Marian… we have worked together before… in a class for FSU’s study abroad in Spain. It’s not too big and not too small... it’s a bit cosmopolitan, Blat says. “You can find art, there’s the beach, and the sea. I like how people from Valencia live.”

Blat is a true advocate for studying abroad, and she hopes students gain that experience. For students who do take the opportunity, Blat wants them to know this: “Get to know the culture because it will open your mind and it will make you a better person.”

“I see they are very emotional and sometimes they don’t want to leave. “I think that’s really sweet. And I feel part of that.”

Some people have misconceptions about studying abroad. For example, they might believe FSU students taking classes in a different country do not work as hard as students in Tallahassee-based classes. Blat says that maybe be the case for some students, but from her perspective, most of them are motivated to work and learn.

“The students who decide to learn Spanish—not all of them but most of them—really like to communicate and want to use the experience,” she says. And for her, Valencia is the best place for FSU’s study abroad in Spain.

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For the love of language

Marian Blat teaches Spanish at FSU Valencia, giving students the necessary speaking skills to communicate in their new environment

Photo courtesy of Marian Blat

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— Marian Blat
FSU Valencia alumna Kamille Catala gained experiences abroad that continue to benefit her personally and professionally

Kamille Catala is thinly slicing fresh parsley and evenly sprinkling it over the bubbling mix in the large, cast-iron pan, adding the finishing touch to her paella. She is learning to perfect this dish in a culinary class during the summer of 2017, when she studied abroad in Valencia, Spain. Surrounded by smiling faces of other students, she is reminded of her experiences in Puerto Rico with her grandfather, when she first made the well-known traditional Valencian meal. Catala, who graduated from Florida State University in the spring of 2019 with bachelor’s degrees in English and communication, has always desired new and exciting adventures—from unique dishes to destinations, she takes the challenges head-on. Therefore, the decision to study abroad in Valencia was an easy one for her to make. Before she filled out the paperwork and made the commitment to join other FSU students in Spain, however, she did a bit of personal research. Sorting through her family ancestry, she discovered that a significant part of her heritage is rooted in Spain. Catala was thrilled she would have an opportunity to cultivate her knowledge of Spanish culture, connect with her own family ties, and fine-tune her language skills. “Discovering that a significant part of my heritage is from Spain opened up a different culture that I hadn’t had too much direct contact with,” Catala says. “By being able to study abroad in Valencia, I got to see and experience the Spanish way of life. I wanted to get closer to my heritage and learn where I’m from and this experience brought me closer to that.” When people consider traveling to Spain, they typically decide to visit Madrid or Barcelona. Although Valencia is not a huge tourist destination, the city has a lot to offer its visitors. The scenic sandy beaches and jaw-dropping architecture in the city’s central plazas are a small sample of the many attractions. “I think Valencia is a lot nicer and a lot more developed than people would assume since many don’t even know about the city,” Catala says. Valencia is a hidden gem on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, where Catala spent those five weeks of studying abroad immersing herself in all the city has to offer. Most of the activities and destinations in Valencia are unique and offer visitors a much-needed break from the hustle and bustle of those bigger cities, she adds. The city center is well-known for its Gothic architecture. While strolling past the iconic Torres de Serranos every morning on her way to class, Catala says she admired its beauty along with the mouth-watering aromas of the food from the local restaurants. She lived in FSU’s Golden dorm, steps away from a few of the most popular parts of the city, which allowed her to explore often. When her morning class ended around noontime, Catala would always opt for a salmon and cheese croquette from Pan de Queso, the locally owned restaurant directly across from the Gold study center, as a quick and cheap alternative to a typical lunch. Her interactions with the staff and the locals at Pan de Queso allowed her to practice her Spanish while enjoying the fresh and local cuisine. “I’m always a very indecisive person and the (Pan de Queso) staff members were always there ready to help me decide,” Catala says. “They would also have such genuine conversations with me that would help me practice even more on my Spanish.” One aspect of Valencia that stood out to Catala everywhere was the people. She easily recognized something special about her temporary home compared to other places she has visited. “Since studying abroad, the countries I’ve been to has skyrocketed,” Catala says. “I’ve been to Switzerland, UK, Austria, Netherlands, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Czech Republic, France, and Hungary.” Comparing Valencia to other European cities, Catala says, “I had pre-conceived notions about this town, and I just knew that the people in Spain are really genuine and welcoming. The Valencian locals made it easy to adjust to my new surroundings, along with the amazing cuisine.” Enrolling in International Programs’ Editing, Writing, and Media Program was an easy choice for Catala, even though she did not have much experience with journalistic-style writing at the time. Before she began the EWM program, she was not that interested in media or anything related to the topic. The program experience changed her outlook, she says. “Before the EWM Valencia program I really didn’t know exactly what I wanted to do since EWM can lead to so many different careers,” she says. “But during the EWM program I started learning the editorial journalistic process and I really loved it. I loved the editing process of the magazine. That was the gateway to me learning the rest of Adobe Suite.” During the two twice-a-week classes she attended, she learned useful skills that sparked her interest in this new subject matter. She learned computer applications such as Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, and she gained the experience of designing her own two-page magazine spread in the Summer 2017 issue of Nomadic Noles. “Because we also got to add and edit our own pictures onto our pages, I loved moving everything around and creating a beautiful page with my design aesthetic,” she says. The overall process strengthened her knowledge of the journalism field, and when she returned to the U.S. and to FSU’s main campus, Catala says she had a better understanding of what she wanted to do for her career. That led her to intern with several different organizations, and she currently is a social content coordinator at the Zimmerman Advertising Agency in Tallahassee. Well after the program ended, Catala realizes that her time in Valencia was worth the investment. She uses the magazine experience as a reference during job interviews, and she includes her article in her résumé. For example, during her interview for her current job with the Zimmerman Agency, Catala was asked, “Do you studied abroad in Valencia—please tell me more about that?” Catala answered enthusiastically by explaining the EWM program and all of the new skills she had gained from the experience. Afterward, she reflected on the interview and realized how vital the EWM program was in separating her from others when applying for jobs. “I just feel like employers are looking for something different and unique nowadays,” she says. “And the fact that I’ve studied abroad shows that I’m not a simple person who sits at home and does the same things all of the time. It truly takes a lot for people to leave every one and get out of your comfort zone.” Catala considers her time in Valencia as not only a once-in-a-lifetime trip but also an adventure that helped her establish and shape her future career path. “Everyone should take advantage of this program,” she says. “When you arrive in Valencia, savor every moment. You will learn a lot about yourself when you travel to different places. Overall, traveling enhances people and enhances the world.” Immersing yourself in a vastly different culture may seem difficult to do, but Catala says and shows that the payoff can be significant.

—Kamille Catala

“Traveling enhances people and the world.”

Skills in Spain & beyond

Kamille Catala paragliding in Switzerland Photos courtesy of Kamille Catala

By Kayla Walston

Traveling enhances people and the world.

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Kamille Catala paragliding in Switzerland Photos courtesy of Kamille Catala

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Traveling enhances people and the world.
Q&A with Claudia Gonzalez

Interviews and design on pages 26 and 27 by Kayla Walston

Photos on page 26 courtesy of Claudia Gonzalez

Photos on page 27 courtesy of Rosalie Peyton

Summer 2015 alumna

Summer 2016 alumna

Why did you choose to study abroad in Valencia?

I got to study abroad in Valencia my last semester of my senior year. I had a couple of friends who had studied in Valencia a few years before me, and they had fallen in love with the city. I always knew that if I ever got the opportunity to study abroad, I would like to do it in Spain, as I know the language. Luckily enough, in Valencia there was an [editing, writing, and media] program, which made it an easy choice for me because I was able to finish the last few classes I needed to graduate. So really it was a no brainer.

How has the experience influenced your life?

Studying abroad truly changed my life. I quickly fell in love with Spain, the people, and the culture, and I instantly knew that I needed to come back one way or another. I went home and started looking for ways to get back as soon as I could. My mom’s friend, who lives in Madrid, informed her of a program that allows native English speakers to come to Spain to teach English at schools. I took that opportunity and moved to Mallorca in 2016. Now, three years later I am still living in Mallorca and working as an English auxiliary.

What advice do you have for students planning to study in Valencia or students who are already here?

Enjoy this experience to the fullest. As lame as that sounds it’s true. Go on every trip your friends or the program [plans]. Eat all the food. If you can, make friends with the locals. Don’t stay in your dorm because you don’t feel comfortable or because it’s too hot; go out there and experience everything Valencia has to offer. You really won’t be disappointed.

How has living in Spain affected your view of the U.S.?

After living in Spain for three years I have realized that my view of the U.S. has been negatively affected. With everything that is going on [in the States], now it is easy to look at where I live and see all the good things about [Spain]. However, I am not that educated in Spanish politics, so I am sure they do have their problems.

What surprised you most about Valencia or Spain?

Coming to Spain all those years ago, everything surprised me. It was my ﬁrst time in Europe, so it was all so new to me.

What part/thing in Valencia or abroad reminded you of home?

Honestly, everything seemed to feel like home to me. I instantly felt comfortable walking the streets and interacting with the locals. Maybe it was the fact that I spoke the language and was able to understand a lot of what was being said or maybe it was the fact that my friend Millie Aburto came on this journey with me. I have spent a couple of days in Valencia, it instantly felt like home to me.

What have you learned about yourself or your view of the U.S.?

I have learned to be more open to new experiences or opportunities that may seem intimidating at first. With both of my experiences studying abroad (in London and in Valencia), I had some anxieties beforehand. However, they both ended up being some of the best times of my life. I know now that I can adapt to new places and find my space wherever I am.

Q&A with Rosalie Peyton

Why did you choose to study abroad in Valencia?

Before studying abroad in Valencia, I studied with FSU in London for a broad curriculum program. I had greatly enjoyed that experience. I then heard about the [editing,writing, and media] program that FSU offered in Valencia. Being an English major who also loved traveling and studying abroad, this seemed like the perfect experience for me. I had also traveled to Spain with my high school after my senior year, and I was feeling the pull to return.

How has the experience influenced your life?

I recently spent 10 months living in Madrid, as a teaching assistant in a bilingual school. Studying in Valencia deﬁnitely opened me up to that idea. It helps to have had someone who told me once to go to a country before completely jumping into living there for almost a year. I think it also made the transition of living in Spain a lot easier for me. I was able to adjust faster to the Spanish culture than I perhaps would have otherwise.

What advice do you have for students planning to study in Valencia or students who are already here?

Don’t be afraid to explore while you are there. Put yourself out in order to get the most out of your experience. Sometimes you may be a little uncomfortable, but I think that can be a good thing. Within the discomfort there is growth.

How has living in Spain affected your view of the U.S.?

I have spent a lot of time in Spain. It keeps managing to pull me back somehow. I have traveled there, and I have worked there. In all that time, I have found that it has a different sort of flow than the U.S. does. People in America tend to focus a lot more on their career. Everyone is always asking you what you do or what you plan to do next. Being someone who has never been too career oriented or had any idea what I’m going to do with my life, that sort of goal-orientated mindset has always stressed me out. Perhaps that is why I have found so much comfort in the more life-orientated Spain. Family and happiness seem to be more at the forefront in Spain.

What have you learned about yourself or your view of the U.S.?

I had taken some Spanish classes before, but with the acquisition of languages not being a strong suit of mine, my Spanish level was very low. I didn’t take any Spanish classes while in Valencia, so I wouldn’t say that my proficiency improved much. I did grow more comfortable attempting to actual ly converse with people in Spanish, something that I never had to do in the U.S.
Visiting the city of Segovia is a side trip for FSU students who go to Madrid. Catalania, at the time. In fact, FSU’s chosen dates for the trip to Barcelona were during the Catalanion political elections, and FSU chose to avoid traveling to an area of risk with such a big group of students. In addition, the planning team had been thinking about changing things up for 2019 anyway. “This was the perfect opportunity to try something new,” Acosta says.

So, in the spring of 2019, FSU took students to the region of Andalusia. Within this region, students had the chance to explore the cities of Cordoba, Seville, and Granada. “We chose these three cities because of all the history,” Acosta says.

The second organized trip of the spring semester was to northern Spain, where students had the chance to explore the cities of Burgos and Leon. “We did a bit of Camino de Santiago—a pilgrimage around 500 kilometers long that normally takes months—but we did just a tiny part of it,” Acosta says. All of these trips were chosen to highlight Spain—its culture, history and landscape—giving students learning experiences and memories of each element. The first summer session of 2019 is when things became really exciting. For the first time since planning trips for students, FSU traveled to Mallorca. While there, students were able to experience a little bit of everything. They took an overnight ferry to the island, explored ancient caves, and went to the Rafa Nadal Museum Xperience, which spotlights the Spanish tennis pro and his achievements. Students took time to sightsee in the city of Palma de Mallorca, and they rode a 100-year-old historical train through the island.

During the second summer session, the program took students to Madrid. “It was so cool to immerse ourselves into a new city and new culture, right here in Spain, that felt so different to our home base of Valencia” says Kayla Acosta. So many things sometimes, I loved how we could experience places that not many people get to go to, doing things that many don’t get to do.”

As a staff member, Acosta sees the planning of these trips as challenging in a good way. “I get stressed—especially about Mallorca—I have to trust tour guides and rely on their word,” Acosta says about her first time planning an organized trip to that location. “At first it was a lot of pressure, but now I feel ready for the next time and that I can take on anything.”

She adds that there’s comfort in success, but you still learn to work faster and harder: “Now I always look forward to these trips because of how much one learns.”

For students, these trips provide opportunities to see parts of Spain and to participate in activities not normally or easily accessed by students. In the future, whether by planes, trains, boats, or buses, FSU will continue to help students discover Spain.

“We have to think about everything. Do we have the police phone number, what happens if a student gets hurt, do we have the city hall number?”

— Paula Acosta, FSU Valencia’s cultural program coordinator
Been around the block
FSU Valencia students relive their travel experiences
By Savannah Tindall

C

oim, cool, and collected, Florida State University student Claire Chiarotti confidently hands the airport security personnel her U.S. passport. He opens it and stamps “SPAIN,” adding another country in the book. The stamp is next to Japan and Germany, two countries she once called home. Growing up with a parent in the military introduced Chiarotti to many different cultures around the world, which inspired countless hours of Chiarotti applying for scholarships and planning her study abroad trip.

Once she is in Valencia’s city center, she walks around the arches of the Torres de Serranos. Chiarotti smiles as she takes in her new, temporary home, seeing here for the first time. She texts her parents—her same can be said of the reverse. Cumiskey’s curiosity to venture into the unknown, but when she enters her apartment she sees a familiar face: Chiarotti, her best friend.

With Cumiskey’s trip anxiety out of the way, the two have the best three months of their lives. “These memories and moments are so precious to me because they helped me to establish roots going forth with my 20s,” Cumiskey says. While previous travel can fuel some students’ dreams of studying abroad, such as Chiarotti’s experiences, the same can be said of the reverse. Cumiskey’s curiosity to venture into the unknown drove her to apply to Valencia’s study abroad program.

“Not traveling abroad made me want to study abroad even more since studying in another country for a whole semester is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” Cumiskey says.

Whether or not students have previous travel experience, traveling to other places once they are at their study abroad location opens up completely new experiences for some students because of their newfound freedom. No longer do they have to double-check their plans with their family. Instead, they set the terms for what activities they are doing, who they are going with, and where they are going.

Not only did students interviewed for this article enjoy the freedom they experienced during their independent traveling, Chiarotti adds, “traveling is a form of education that in and of itself is a teacher that continuously teaches someone a lesson long after the experience is over.” Now more than ever, independent travel is a fixture of the study abroad experience, regardless of students’ prior travel experience.

While Cumiskey did some traveling with just her best friend, they typically traveled with their roommates Travis Ward, Colton Herrmann, and Michael Caril. And even though Cumiskey’s previous travel experience was minimal, she quickly found her footing and was planning trips both inside and outside of Spain not only for herself but also for her entire group of friends. After nights of planning and one flight later, she and her friends arrived in Dublin, Ireland, and had such a good time that she is planning on returning to the country in a year.

Students who participate in a study abroad program typically have an appetite for the unknown and the foreign, which can stem from their previous experiences with travel. Ward, for example, says that his travels before coming to Valencia were “more of an incentive” to study abroad because he wanted to see how independent he would be in a foreign country.

From traveling with his family to now being in charge of his trips, Ward learned “the intricacies of planning a trip like lodging, packing, transportation,” giving him a newfound sense of responsibility.

While being responsible is one of the obvious lessons learned from independent travel, Caril says that he appreciated traveling with people his age. That aspect opened him up more to the culture of the particular place he was visiting since his group’s agenda was less streamlined and he was meeting locals his age. Tales of students’ adventures from the Valencia program inspired other students to plan trips together as well. Julia Fernandez, Hallie Moehring, Chloe Addleson, and Julia Ewers ventured out in various combinations, taking trips that encouraged bonding, immersion in various cultures, and personal growth.

Fernandez and Moehring took an independent trip with their friends to Amsterdam. Both say they enjoyed the freedom to plan their vacation the way they wanted and the ability to choose their company. Fernandez admits she never had a “biking desire” to go to Amsterdam, but her friend’s interest in going piqued her own curiosity. She researched the city and decided to go. “The scenery is just so beautiful and there were just so many things in Amsterdam that looked interesting to me,” Fernandez says. They both enjoyed their time and activities in Amsterdam.

“I thought all of the flowers and greenery were just breathtaking,” Moehring says. “We all had a blast making the best out of our short weekend trip together.” Since that trip was such a success, Fernandez and Moehring traveled again with friends, this time to Interlaken, Switzerland, during the Valencia program’s final weekend in late July.

Ewers, one of the more adventurous of the bunch, led a driving two-hour hike up Mount Harder Kulm—with an elevation of about 4,300 feet—and helped motivate everyone else to keep going to the top. After surviving the steep climb and the high altitude, the students looked out in awe of the view and what they had accomplished.

“Getting to experience such a beautiful sight with six new friends by my side was the peak (pun intended) of my weekend trip,” Addleson says.

Traveling with people you have just met in a foreign country might seem intimidating, yet the students spotlighted in this article encourage others to do so because of the lasting memories and the personal growth, Herrmann says.

“(Before traveling,) I wouldn’t say I had a limited worldview, but for me, I never really thought past the United States,” he says. “I hit the arrogant American stereo-type where I thought everyone else in the world was just trying to keep up with our culture. “I learned through study abroad that my identity and story is one of many and not more relevant than anyone else’s.”

Photos: (1) Claire Chiarotti and Amber Cumiskey on a weekend trip to Málaga, Spain. (2) In March 2018, Travis Ward traveled alone to Chamonix, France. With a friend he met there, they visited the top of Mont Blanc, the highest peak in the Alps. (3) Julia Fernandez poses in July of 2019 with tulips at the Bloemenmarkt in Amsterdam. (4) From left to right, Chloe Addleson, Shawa Fissell, Julia Fernandez, Paige Eastland, Julia Ewers, Skilar Keenan, and Hallie Moehring gather for a group photo at an Amsterdam canal in July of 2019. (5) After a long hike to the peak of Harder Kulm in July of 2019, Julia Ewers performs a plank. Photos: courtesy of (1) Claire Chiarotti, (2) Travis Ward, (3) Julia Fernandez, (4) Hallie Moehring, and (5) Julia Ewers.
Archaeological sites surround FSU’s Valencia study centers, and Juan Salazar shares why his field is so important

By Miranda Sullivan

The bell chimes clear and loud, adding to the melodic chatter and bustle of the Plaza de la Virgen below. El Miguelete, or as the locals say, Torre del Micalet, has stood watch over Valencia’s Carmen district for centuries. The landmark has become a thread beneath the modern city streets. El Miguelete, or as the bell chimes clear and loud, adds to the melodic chatter and bustle of the Plaza de la Virgen below. El Miguelete, or as the locals say, Torre del Micalet, has stood watch over Valencia’s Carmen district for centuries. The landmark has become a thread beneath the modern city streets.

Archaeological sites surround FSU’s Valencia study centers, and Juan Salazar shares why his field is so important.

Dusting off the past

By Miranda Sullivan

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Archaeological sites surround FSU’s Valencia study centers, and Juan Salazar shares why his field is so important.

"When I first saw the bell tower, I felt so small compared to it and it was kind of terrifying," says Stephanie Newman, a senior who studied in Valencia during the Summer 2019 second session. "Then we climbed [the tower], and it made me feel so lucky to have the chance to love this city."

In Valencia, FSU students have the opportunity to take interactive archaeology courses and visit important historical buildings in the city. Many other ruins lie meters beneath the modern city streets.

"We still don’t know answers to why our world is the way it is today. There is still a lot of work for archaeologists to do. Luckily, FSU Valencia students can discover the past through interactive classes and an immersion in history."

Archaeological sites surround FSU’s Valencia study centers, and Juan Salazar shares why his field is so important.

"When I first saw the bell tower, I felt so small compared to it and it was kind of terrifying. Then we climbed [the tower], and it made me feel so lucky to have the chance to love this city."

— Stephanie Newman, FSU student in 2019 Summer Session II

Opposite page, top: Tile from L’Almoina, a museum that shows the setup of an ancient Roman town. Many other ruins lie meters beneath the modern city streets.

Dr. Juan Salazar, who is a professional archaeologist and FSU Valencia instructor, can explore buildings, collections, and objects...you can really experience the history of the city first hand.

Salazar, along with other locals who grew up in Valencia, has a different appreciation for the ruins from what tourists sense when they see them. Salazar often works on projects that include rescue archaeology, where he and others excavate ruins that have been discovered during construction work in an area.

This can delay the new building from being completed, but the importance of preserving the past outweighs the timeline of construction, and Salazar says those locations are important to the culture of Valencia. Locals do not come to the ruins to marvel at how old the city is; they come to feel a part of their past. Instead, the ruins represent everyone who has come before them and everything that has shaped their nation.

"That’s like having a Roman architect coming back and saying, ‘I know how the Moorish wall and El Miguelete are still a lot of work for archaeologists to do."

"We still don’t know answers to why our world is the way it is today. There is still a lot of work for archaeologists to do. Luckily, FSU Valencia students can discover the past through interactive classes and an immersion in history."
Fútbol en la ciudad

By Kelly Rico

The final outcome topped the headlines and made many jaws drop. The score even made history. Valencia Club de Fútbol beat Barcelona FC 2-1 on May 25, 2019, to clinch its eighth King’s Cup. Valencia CF faced off against the 30-time winners of the cup, and they beat them. What makes this victory all the better is that it happened in the team’s centenary year. The club was founded March 1919, which makes 2019 its 100th year of competition.

The King’s Cup, also known as Copa del Rey, is a Spanish football tournament consisting of several rounds. Founded in 1903, this year’s tourney began in September 2018 with 83 teams, before the final two teams were decided in late February 2019. With victories like this one and 100-year anniversaries come celebrations. Humilating one of the best European teams to date is certainly a reason for Valencians to pop a couple of champagne bottles. Some of the celebrations that have occurred since Valencia CF’s incredible victory against Barcelona include everything from honoring Spanish King Felipe VI with a jersey with the number “100” on it in a ceremony that took place in Valencia to street parades consisting of several rounds. Founded in 1903, this year’s tourney began in September 2018 with 83 teams, before the final two teams were decided in late February 2019.

With victories like this one and 100-year anniversaries come celebrations. Humilating one of the best European teams to date is certainly a reason for Valencians to pop a couple of champagne bottles. Some of the celebrations that have occurred since Valencia CF’s incredible victory against Barcelona include everything from honoring Spanish King Felipe VI with a jersey with the number “100” on it in a ceremony that took place in Valencia to street parades filled with fans painted head to toe in Valencia CF’s colors.

“Soccer brings the city together more than politics and social issues combined,” Florida State University Valencia Dean and Program Director Ignacio Messana says. “It brings us together as a society like nothing else.”

Messana was born and raised in Valencia, so he has watched the progression of soccer and he sees the powerful impact the sport has on the community. He says it has always been a fan, and he has a heartfelt appreciation for the sport and the team. Scoring its two goals in the 21st and 33rd minutes, Valencia CF took advantage of opportunities early on in the game, while Barcelona waited until the 73rd minute to put its lone goal in the back of the net. Statistics even show that Barcelona took more than double the shots on goal than Valencia CF. The four-time defending champions, Barcelona, had possession of the ball for 80 percent of the game, and they even had 600 more passes. At the end of the day, however, what matters is which team can finish, and that team was Valencia CF. Since the unexpected victory, the city of Valencia has come together to show its elation. The appreciation for soccer and the overall culture of Valencia grew a couple of notches when the team came out on top. Locals wearing jerseys with “Valencia CF” across their chest are on almost every soccer field. The fans are ecstatic.

Soccer has a huge presence in Valencia, of course, and FSU students studying in Valencia in 2019 were treated to the enthusiasm the sport creates in the city. The high energy of fans at local restaurants was the first indicator to two in particular that residents hold soccer very close to their hearts.

FSU students Alexa Janeiro, a senior advertising major, and Cassidy Barker said they could barely have a conversation because of how boisterous the local fans were while watching Valencia CF play the Swiss football team Sion on July 23. Being in this atmosphere was when they realized how important soccer is to the locals, so they decided to make soccer a part of their study abroad experience. They began showing up for the soccer games FSU Valencia holds every Monday and Wednesday night on a local pitch. “The energy in the stadium is electric through the roar of the fans,” Janeiro says. “We aren’t the most talented soccer players, but we definitely try,” Janeiro says. All students, regardless of skill level, are welcome to the friendly games. Everyone is there for a good time and some exercise to burn off the tapas.

“Valencia CF” across their jerseys, students of Spanish culture toward sports. They really embrace soccer as a collective community more than just as a team.”

The impact Valencia CF has had on the city and, in turn, the students who become temporary residents is significant. The sport of soccer can unite a community, even the world, like nothing else. For the FSU students who join the local games, Valencia becomes less of a place “abroad,” and more of a place to call home.

“Soccer brings the city together more than politics and social issues combined. It brings us together as a society like nothing else.”

— Ignacio Messana

Some of his best friends in the program through the small-sized (7-on-7) games. “I thought that was a fantastic example of Spanish culture toward sports. They really embrace soccer as a collective community more than just as a team.”

FSU student Alex Ramirez heads toward the net to score his second goal of the game.

Students take a shot at soccer to enjoy Spanish culture and to learn “the beautiful game.”

FSU students get together for a team picture after a friendly 7 vs. 7 match.

All photos courtesy of Alexa Janeiro

FSU student Trey Snyder says he is passionate about the sport and its importance to bring in more participants.

“I've really been able to see how much of an impact the soccer culture of Valencia has on the students,” says Annemarie Jude, a program assistant for FSU Valencia during the 2019 summer sessions. Jude earned bachelor’s degrees in spring 2019 in business marketing and media communication studies. “It translates to the field, and it’s been so fun to watch everyone come together to play the beautiful game. We’ve even had some Valencia locals join in on our games and teach us a few things too.”

Valencia’s lively soccer culture encouraged other students to get on the pitch and stay active during their time abroad. FSU student Trey Snyder says he is passionate about the sport and adds his love for soccer grew during the summer session. He especially appreciates how the locals build on the sport’s importance to bring in more participants.

“Once I got to Valencia, I saw how everyone really embraces the idea of a team and the culture behind it,” says Snyder, who played in those twice-weekly games, and says he even met...
Discover the depth behind Valencian street art that inspires the city

By Rebecca McCandless

n walks through the streets of Valencia, travelers unfamiliar with the area might discover an interesting, contemporary surprise: street art. Layered over walls centuries-old are murals painted in every color imaginable—bright amber, cerulean, magenta. Myriad geometric shapes depict creatures from Aztec myths, 50’s-esque pinup girls with sly smiles, and even ninjas that inspire the city behind Valencian street art.

Painting the streets

By Rebecca McCandless

Graffiti transforms plain urban walls into a stage for contemporary artists. The vibrant work of David de Limón, better known as La Calle de los Colores, is a stop along the tour. According to tour guide Catalina Benito Mulet, the street had once been one of the most neglected in the area. However, under the leadership of the new mayor of Valencia, David de Limón, the street had been revitalized by art.

Calzada, Calle de Moret was revitalized by art and came to be known as La Calle De los Colores. This unique initiative invited artists to interpret their photographs and translate them onto the street’s walls. The not too distant past, these walls were in a state of total disrepair. While leading Florida State University students through the neighborhood of El Carmén, tour guide Catalina Benito Mulet explains the positive impact street art has had on the city since the flood of 1957. She is referring to a torrential rainfall that led to an overflow of the Turia River. The overflow discharged more than 70 trillion gallons of water into the region, devastating countless homes and landmarks. Years later, Valencia still feels the effects of the flood; many buildings remain abandoned in the area.

Calle de Moret, better known as La Calle de los Colores, or the Street of Colors, is a stop along the tour. According to Mulet, the street had once been one of the most neglected in Valencia—housing loiterers and sex workers and also the studio of photographer Alfonso Calza. Reportedly tired of the dirt and odor of urine, Calza began an urban art project to revitalize the street.

His unique initiative invited artists to interpret his photographs and translate them onto the street’s walls. Thanks to the artist, Calza, Calle de Moret was revitalized by art and came to be known as La Calle De los Colores. The most famous of the paintings features a kiss between two people in the London Bridge Station. Couples across the world travel to this painting to snap a selfie of themselves.

One tension of a graffiti drawer is to paint their messages so that they are not against anything, you do not have to think of something that is not against anything, you can do it and there is no problem. Limón confesses that he used to participate in graffiti, but explains that he matured and transformed his art to follow a mentality closer to street art. "I wanted to do something more artistic," he says. "This is why I think I am half of a graffiti writer and half of a street artist… I love the graffiti part of bombing. Bombing is to repeat the same signature in a city until people begin to recognize the signature. I love it because it is a type of advertisement, but doesn’t look good. It is more connected with its people, fo-cused on spreading kindness and ensuring that people feel empowered. (Unifying people) wouldn’t be going too far. I think it reminds people of the past—there’s a lot of street art about the flood."

That is not to say, however, that all paint in the streets is equally welcomed. David de Limón, the artist behind the prolific ninja figure found on almost every wall in El Carmén, explains the differences between legal street art and vandalistic graffiti. "Visually, the difference is that graffiti is letters, and street art is drawings, but this is not the total truth," he says. "There is some graffiti with drawings and some street art with typography." Limón continues. "The real difference is the intention behind the drawing. The intention of a graffiti drawer is to paint for the graffiti community—to outdo one another on top of a building, on a train. They don’t think about the people or that they are destroying a door or a wall. They just want to have their paint in all the places. “Street artists think about the street art community, but also the people who are going to see [their work]. They have an artistic intention.”

In the past, city officials have attempted to regulate the paint on the streets by enacting laws, but according to Limón, the new mayor of Valencia is beginning to make some exceptions. "If you don’t have permission to paint on private property, it is illegal," Limón says. "[But if you paint on an abandoned building, the owner doesn’t report you, and if the painting is not against religious or political beliefs or racist, the police won’t fine you]," he explains. "The owner can still clean the paint. It is not a protected work, but you won’t have a problem with the police. The new government says if you are not destroying anything and you are doing something that is not against anything, you can do it and there is no problem.

Limón confesses that he used to participate in graffiti, but explains that he matured and transformed his art to follow a mentality closer to street art. "I wanted to do something more artistic," he says. "This is why I think I am half of a graffiti writer and half of a street artist… I love the graffiti part of bombing. Bombing is to repeat the same signature in a city until people begin to recognize the signature. I love it because it is a type of advertisement, but don’t like the part of destroying or aggression."

When [people] do street art, they want to insert a message. I don’t like this too much because I am not sure of my philosophy. I was sure about one thing—I [know] I want to translate that paint can be positive," Limón says. "I never put letters or typography with my character. I want the character thinking of something. The most common [shape] I use is the heart because the heart translates the positivity of painting.

FSU students who saw the murals spoke about the emotional impact of Limón’s work and the work of other street artists in the area. "My favorite street art is a mural that’s down an alley around the Plaza Del Virgen, it has a river of water and two arms breaking the surface which hold a baby above the waves," Miranda Sullivan, an FSU junior, says. "I just think that it’s a unique mural, and I appreciate that it pays homage to the city’s past." Sullivan speaks about how she interprets the waves, painted by Victoria Cano Pérez, to represent the flood of 1957.

From the oddly elegant Aztec figures by Disneylexya, to the pinup girls by La Nena Wapa Wapa, to the ninjas of positivity by David De Limón and the work of many other artists whose work appears on the walls, one thing is sure: Students, tourists, and residents alike cannot deny the captivating effect of the art that covers the streets.

See the next page for a longer Q&A with David de Limón.

Above: Victoria Cano Perez illustrates the flood of Valencia.

Bottom right: The ninja painted by David de Limón.

Photo by Miranda Sullivan

Street art featuring La Nena Wapa Wapa and David de Limón.

Photo by Rebecca McCandless

"I want to say with all my work that paint can be positive."

— David de Limón

"If you don’t have permission to paint..."

— David de Limón
Rebecca McCandless interviews Valencia street artist David de Limón

Rebecca: What inspired you to become a street artist?

David de Limón: I come from graffiti. I started doing graffiti because I knew two friends who were painting graffiti. And I said, “Oh, that’s amazing because I love to paint and to paint something that other people can see.” I was 17 years old, and for me it was amazing. But, when you grow up and start thinking differently, you are not such a vandal. You start to appreciate more that things are beautiful, and you want to do beautiful things. When I studied fine arts, it was a transformation from a graffiti artist to a street artist because I grew up. I like to do things that the people will like too.

So you started in graffiti?

I started in graffiti because all my life I loved to paint. That was one thing more or less that I knew—I wanted to be a street artist.

How does your signature represent you?

My [ninja] character represents my signature. This is why I designed my character in black and white. It is not because I love ninjas—it is because I started doing graffiti by designing a character for my signature. David is my real name, but Limón is my tag. Before, a piece of lemon, a lemon that you have in the glasses that is cut in slices, was my first signature. I chose the lemon because it is the opposite of the Valencian orange. Because I started doing this type of signature, I started to think about changing to a character. A lemon is nice, but a lemon can’t do anything. Well I started before to do this type of lemon [as he draws a lemon with eyes and legs]. But finally, I decided to put a little mask inside of the lemon and designed the final character that I am drawing now. I decided to do it in black—only one color—like when you paint a signature you have only one color. When I designed it, I was thinking about a character that I can paint quickly and with only one color.

What is it like to collaborate with other artists?

It is very funny because I had a meeting one month ago with the people from the government—the people who make the bike lanes. We made a collaborative piece because I proposed to paint all the boxes that are along the bike lanes. It is funny because I put my character with a phone—a mobile phone—with a line through it because [the message is] “Don’t use your mobile phone in the bike lanes.” I am not telling you this all because I want you to think “David is a cool guy.” I am telling you this because, at the beginning, the government didn’t like street art, but if you propose something interesting, they have no problem.

Do you have a rough estimate of how many paintings you have done?

I have a little database, or look how many posts I have—882—that is 90 percent of my paintings.

What is your favorite project that you have worked on?

My favorite was the Graffiti Art Festival that I organized with my team, La Nena Wapa Wapa, and four others in Cheste. It is a little town close to Valencia. This is the most important project because it was not only a big wall for us, but we also selected six big artists from around the world, too. So, as artists always say, you must never think that something is your best design or piece of art. You must have a best design because if you have your best design, close up and go home. You must always improve and renew.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

I want to change the mind. Ten years ago, if you were carrying around paint, they [the police] could ask you, “What you are doing with paint?” And you would say, “Oh my God, it’s paint! Not guns or bombs!” But I created a masked character to say that he has to be hidden to paint, because it is necessary to hide in order to paint. I am the same guy in the morning. I try to hide a little because some people may know me.

De Grummond took the helm of the excavation in 1983, and though it was intended to be only a temporary position, the rewarding and intriguing nature of the work saw her retain the position for more than three decades.

“I was only supposed to be here for three years,” she says, “but the work was so satisfying that I stayed.”

The wooded, hilltop site has produced a plethora of objects that allow scholars and Florida State excavators alike a clearer glimpse into the daily reality of Italy in antiquity. These range from golden statuettes, which the Etruscans may have utilized as idols, to ceramic pitchers that retained the water for the citizens of the Roman Empire.

Eventually, a permanent gallery displaying the artifacts uncovered by De Grummond and her students will be unveiled in the small town of Gaiole, near Catamara. The meaning of the Gaiole museum to De Grummond cannot be overstated. After almost four decades of digging, De Grummond and her team have uncovered over 2,000 years of Etruscan civilization on the part of Florida State University and its staff.

This article was originally published in the Fall 2018 issue of ItaliaNoles, a student-run publication based at FSU’s Florence campus, and has been edited for style. The museum in the town of Gaiole, Italy, that will house artifacts uncovered by Professor Nancy de Grummond and her students.
By Jennifer Walker

You’re not 11 years old anymore. But that doesn’t matter when the letter finally arrives, because regardless of the time it took to reach you, you’re going to Hogwarts.

During a four-week study abroad program in London, Florida State University students can explore the Wizarding World, Middle Earth, and Narnia where the novels Harry Potter, The Lord of the Rings, and The Chronicles of Narnia are studied in the heart of their birthplace—England.

The Religion, Fantasy, and British Culture course—referred to as the “Harry Potter Class” by FSU students—seeks to identify the origin of these novels within the context of British history and religion. Ultimately, it helps students grasp the oversaturation of these works in popular culture.

“It’s taking over the world,” says Sonya Cronin, who teaches the Harry Potter Class abroad and has a Ph.D. in humanities. “You don’t understand culture if you don’t understand fiction, and it is a common language. As these works of fantasy are passed down to subsequent generations, they continue to permeate cultural ideologies.

“If the impacts of these novels are going to dictate the course of our future—even indirectly—then it is vital to examine their underpinnings and influences,” Cronin says. With the added element of studying in London, it is difficult to leave this course without a deeper understanding of the literary works.

“I realized that putting this class in the context of the location where these stories were written could add another layer of depth to the course,” says Zoë Crook, the International Programs coordinator for this program.

Students who take the class have the opportunity to explore the places that inspired the creation of not just the Wizarding World, as it is called in Harry Potter, but also the worlds of Narnia and Middle Earth. From the doorstep of the London Study Center, to every museum and historic site, “Nowhere is not a teaching moment,” Cronin says.

Students can navigate King’s Cross Station and Platform 9 3/4, just as Harry Potter did on his journey to Hogwarts. They can stroll in the footsteps of authors C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien in the streets of Oxford, and they can go for lunch at the Eagle and Child pub, where Lewis and Tolkien would often come to write, and drink in an atmosphere familiar to them.

But I feel like my experience was made so much more valuable (by) quite literally walking the same paths these authors did, and learning about the culture and the rich history of each place while learning about these stories.”

“J.K. Rowling did not create the world of Harry Potter—the world was England. What she did was enchant it.” — Sonya Cronin

Yet another layer of depth to the course, says Zoe Croak, the International Programs coordinator for this program. Students who take the class have the opportunity to explore the places that inspired the creation of not just the world of Harry Potter, but also the worlds of Narnia and Middle Earth. From the doorstep of the London Study Center, to every museum and historic site, “Nowhere is not a teaching moment,” Cronin says.

But I feel like my experience was made so much more valuable (by) quite literally walking the same paths these authors did, and learning about the culture and the rich history of each place while learning about these stories.”

“J.K. Rowling did not create the world of Harry Potter—the world was England. What she did was enchant it.” — Sonya Cronin

Cronin explains how these works of fiction have saturated our culture if you don’t understand this modern fantasy.” Cronin says.

Cronin brings the students to see the crown jewels at Tower Bridge. It is uniquely British representation of generational power that stretches across all three works as well as the One Ring in The Lord of the Rings series.

Students also visit the Imperial War Museum in London, since both World War I and II, when Britain stood in Europe at the end as “the last bastion of freedom holding back the darkness,” Cronin says.

This idea of Britain being the final defense reflects a powerful parallel between the World Wars in England and the stories that were written thereafter. The Order of the Phoenix in Harry Potter also stands as the last defense against Voldemort, the primary villain in the saga. Similarly, in The Lord of the Rings, if the villain Sauron wins, the entire West falls.

In addition to history, religion has also played a vital role in the shape of British literature. When she initially signed up for the program, Parks expected to learn about the writing processes behind these series.

“What I didn’t expect,” she says, was leaving this experience with so much more knowledge about these fantasy series and how closely intertwined they are with some of the most well-known tropes in Christian religion.”

The class discusses origins of good and evil, and the ways religious depictions of evil are typically portrayed as a fall from good. It is a concept that may be mirrored in the three main novels studied by the class when good fell into darkness.

Through pub culture, the World Wars, and religion, “British consciousness was transmitted to the world through fantasy,” Cronin says.

These stories have had an undeniable influence on the world. Whether or not you’ve read them, you know they exist and you know that millions of people share a love for them. Children in the 1990s grew up with the Harry Potter books, and now their children are, too.

As new generations of children follow in the footsteps of Harry and his friends, this FSU program has left students with a better understanding of the path Harry is leading them down.

Worldwide

By Jennifer Walker

Though the universe of Harry Potter is set in England, the fan base is not merely made up of native English speakers. Along the streets of Valencia, Spain, Harry Potter-themed statues were placed in popular tourist locations—a teaser for tourists and locals alike. In fact, those wonders awaited fans in the summer of 2019 at the City of Arts and Sciences within the Valencia Harry Potter Exposition.

One local Harry Potter fan, 9-year-old Victoria Messana, explained that the stories are just as much of a phenomenon in Spain as in predominantly English-speaking countries.

“One of my friends has seen all the movies in Spanish and told me, ‘I want to go to London, because I want to see the Harry Potter Studios.’”

Victoria was particularly determined to locate all four of the statues hidden throughout Valencia before visiting the Expo. The final statue, conveniently enough, was located right in front of the Expo.

The exhibit with the giant statue of the sorting hat—which determines your Hogwarts House in the books and movies—Victoria was able to see. She pointed out the house, and her wide eyes filled with excitement at the sight of the Sorting Hat that she had been mirroring as she played on flying broomsticks in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Thirty magical minutes later, Victoria had seen all of the exhibits at the Expo. Her father, FSU Valencia Dean and Director Ignacio Messana, more passionate than ever about Harry Potter and its ability to inspire. With this newfound enthusiasm, Victoria smiled and said, “I want to go to London, because I want to see the Harry Potter Studios.”

Photo by Ignacio Messana

Victoria Messana hugs the sorting hat from Harry Potter, located outside the Harry Potter Expo in Valencia.
Daniel Goldoni, who grew up in Caracas, City of Republic of Panama, is a beneficiary of the 2+2 Scholarship Program. He came to FSU's main campus in the spring of 2019 after finishing his two years in Panama. What was easy, and why? What was challenging, and why?

At first, those two years in Panama felt slow, but when I arrived here I noticed how fast it went. It was easier in the Republic of Panama because [I knew] the majority of the students in my class. I’d also say the transition from my home to my new one at The Venezuela was easier because I have been together with two of my roommates since primary school. It was a coincidence that we ended up in the same university.

But that aside, everything was kind of a challenge. For instance, in Panama I knew it was going to be different because I was not going to have a car as I did in Panama, and now I have to be checking for the bus not to leave me or I can be late for classes. On the other side, I had to make new friends and start thinking of future connections as my Dad would say. But out of everything, for me (I am a family person), the most challenging thing was to be far from my parents. Not having their hugs and advice in walking distance cause in me a lot of stress, which is something additional to the classes. What semester did you begin your studies at FSU Republic of Panama (RoP)?

I live in a student complex called The Village Student Living. Participating in the program, Goldoni, who is 20 years old, focused on classes in Panama that helped him advance until he reached the main campus. Where he could jump into his and career-related courses. In Panama he took courses such as Introduction to Programming, Management and Insurance. What language tests are required for the program? The GPA requirements. The students have proven English proficiency upon entering FSU Panama, so by the time they transfer to the main campus they do not have to take any other language tests. The conditions of the 2+2 are as follows:

- Students must complete 60 credit hours at FSU Panama because [I knew] the majority of the people in my roommates since primary school. It was easier in the Republic of Panama because [I knew] the majority of the students in my class. I’d also say the transition from my home to my new one at The Venezuela was easier because I have been together with two of my roommates since primary school. It was a coincidence that we ended up in the same university. Please describe your transition from the RoP campus to the Tallahassee campus (and to the city of Tallahassee). What was easy, and why? What was challenging, and why?

Daniel Goldoni, back line center, with his FSU Panama soccer team.
Amber Lewis (center) takes a selfie with students in the FSU 2017 Valencia summer program.

BorderS from page 11
color of their skin, face, or religion," he says. "Despite odds, I didn't allow such issues to weigh me down."

However, Hermano says he does have issues with the term Afro-Spaniard. "Afro-Spaniard is equivalent to African-American, but it is wrongly applied," he says. "If Spain does not call those from Argentina, Peru, Colombia, etc. names that have to do with their origin, color of their skin, or hair, then it is not wise to use Afro-Spaniard."

Are those of African descent who are permanently in Valencia and Venice different than those of African descent? Hoping for an insider's take, I talk with FSU Valencia Dean and Director Ignacio Messana, a native of Valencia. In Spain, "racism is not related to the race," Messana says. Instead, he thinks that immigrants' socioeconomic status, as well as their origin, plays a role.

While Hermano perceives some racism in Spain, the African-American interviewed for this article did not share his experience.

"In Valencia, people are more drawn to the fact that I am American and speak English rather than the color of my skin," Lewis says, "where-as in America people obviously don't care about me being American because it is expected, but my race may be the first thing they take note of."

Other African-Americans interviewed did share their experiences. "I was expecting there to be an expectation of how much of a difference it is out of this world," Davis says. "I've almost been in a world of my own. You don't realize how much of a black is out of this world," Davis says. "You don't realize how much of a weight it is until coming to Europe, where it is lifted."

Speaking with those I interviewed, I learned that I was not the only one curious about being black overseas. Davis and spoke at length about the baggage of being black in the United States. "In America, the anxiety of being black is out of this world," Davis says. "You don't realize how much of a weight it is until coming to Europe, where it is lifted."

With this weight lifted, I can explore yourself, and Spain, to the fullest. What is Lewis's advice for African-Americans traveling to Spain? "Don't be nervous about traveling abroad because of your race—people can be more accepting than those back home," she says. My advice? When traveling in Spain, specifically Valencia, come with an open mind. Be willing to immerse yourself in the culture and learn the language—both Spanish and Valencian.

In America, the anxiety of being black is out of this world. You don't realize how much of a weight it is until coming to Europe, where it is lifted. —Jori Davis

Kamari Pless, the author of the article.

Overtourism from page 11
more guided tours, and certainly more tours associated with the cruises."

While not quite locals, FSU students have been noticed by locals. "In Ciutat Vella (Old Town) during their handful of weeks or months in Valencia. In a city they're trying to travel, the tours are always in my way, riding their bikes, scooters, and Segways," senior Kyle McCandless says. "It has been almost run over several times."

FSU junior Rebecca McCandless agrees. "It is harder for many crowds of tourists would try to push us out of the way while we were standing in Plaza de la Virgen," McCandless says. Tourist interest can encourage growth and opportunities for local entrepreneurs, but it can also attract corporate interests and tourism-driven gentrification.

"Some of the backlashes with Airbnb does not," says Francisco Redondo, investigator, member of Valencia's Chamber of Commerce, and former University of Valencia professor. The landlord of the Cathedral Apartments since 1995, Redondo rents out his tourist apartments for FSU Valencia students.

"Airbnb does not meet the increasingly stringent requirements made by the Generalitat de Valencia, which has a strong bias against tourist apartments."

"Airbnb does not meet the increasingly stringent requirements made by the Generalitat de Valencia, which has a strong bias against tourist apartments."

Finding a middle ground
While residents of overtourism capitals feel the brunt of Airbnb's negative effects, its positive effects cannot be ignored either. Airbnb's convenience and lower prices have made it usable for people to travel, Calhou says, emphasizing what the savings can mean for travelers: "I personally believe that Airbnb probably does more good than harm," Calhou says. "Because what Airbnb does is acts as a middleman, and what a middleman does is reduce transaction costs. What Airbnb does is they take the cost and they help match information much faster and probably at a lower price."

Ultimately, Airbnb problems are a side-effect of a bigger issue. With an estimated one billion more people joining the global middle class by 2030, the complex phenomenon of overtourism will not go away anytime soon. "It can be managed."

Growing tourism centers like Valen- cia must hit that sweet spot of watching and regulating tourism growth while at the same time not hindering tourism's positive monetary effects on the local economy.

"Some of the backlashes with Airb- nbs, you've got a different group of peo- ple staying in the condo next door every week. And you want to feel like you know your neighbors and live in a community, and it becomes less of a community."
WHEN IN SPAIN...

Florida State University students in the Summer 2019 editing, writing, and media courses offer their views—in images and in words over the next four pages—on what made their study abroad experience memorable.

When in Spain, students find themselves strutting through plazas—they are everywhere. Each plaza is unique, containing its own set of hidden gems, surrounding shops, musicians, artists, vendors, restaurants, and treasures within. From fountains to bright lights, these plazas are a signature part of one’s time in Spain.

Chloe Addleson

When in Spain, students row their way around the city of Madrid. Nothing compares to listening to music on the water with your best friends on a sunny day.

Kelly Rico

When in Spain, students challenge themselves to jump into the unknown—whether that means trying paella for the first time, meeting new people, or climbing los Torres de Serranos. Studying abroad is a growing experience for all who participate.

Miranda Sullivan

When in Spain, you will meet new people, eat amazing food, shop—a lot—see historic sites, explore, and create experiences that will last a lifetime. You won’t want to miss a moment of what Valencia has to offer.

Kamari Pless

When in Spain, students can explore castles older than the U.S. The city of Xàtiva, which is home to the Castle of Xàtiva, is a short (and inexpensive) train ride from Valencia. The castle carries an expansive history that you can see with each weathered stone.

Caroline Murkey

When in Spain, adventure is around every corner. While in Barcelona, it is fun to strut through the streets, get lost in the crowds, and gawk at the architecture of Antoni Gaudí. Exploring the gorgeous Spanish cities, it is possible for students to discover something new about the country or themselves.

Rebecca McCandless
When in Spain, don't waste one moment. Take every opportunity to explore something new, to meet new people, or to make new memories. Keep an open mind, and be prepared to never want to leave.

Jennifer Walker

When in Spain, scaling the top of Valencia's Torre del Micalet is a must for students. As Valencia's beating heart, the bell tower has rung out the time every hour on the hour since the 15th century. It was an annoyance at first, but I'll miss having El Micalet wake me at 7 every morning.

Ericka Rivera

When in Spain, take advantage of city parks, such as Parque Del Buen Retiro in Madrid. El Retiro has been open to the public since 1767 and is filled with vegetation, monuments, and even an artificial lake.

Emily Voytecek

When in Spain, students can explore more about the world and more about themselves, gaining confidence and perspective from their new cultural experiences.

Megan Magnole

When in Spain, I had the opportunity to befriend a courageous woman who has an incredible story. Reflecting on the life she has lived made my experiences on the very same streets even more meaningful.

Melissa Kindma

When in Spain, when in Dorne—aka Seville—and connect with people who share your interests. I was able to find a great group of friends, and I made lifelong memories while visiting this beautiful country. I will always cherish my time here, and I will miss it terribly.

Savannah Tindall

When in Spain, visit the City of Arts and Sciences. FSU students can admire the modern architecture while rowing through the water.

Kayla Walston

When in Spain, lasting bonds form between students as they share new and unique experiences together.

Emma Jo McAuliffe
Chloe Addleson
Chloe graduated in the summer of 2019 with an English major (editing, writing, and media concentration) and a minor in communication. Originally from the Cayman Islands, Chloe enjoys traveling and is passionate about the entertainment industry. She strives to pursue a communication career in New York City after graduation.

Melissa Kindma
Melissa will graduate with an English degree in December 2019. With a passion for storytelling, she hopes to work as a freelance travel writer and photographer. When she's not writing, you can usually find her exploring Tallahassee or cozying up in a coffee shop with her nose in a book.

Ericka Rivera
Ericka graduated in the summer of 2019. Several movies and television shows have used the location for filming. From left: Jennifer Walker, Melissa Kindma, Kelly Rico (white shirt, green pants), Miranda Sullivan (behind Kelly), Emily Voytecek, Kamari Pless, Chloe Addleson (white shirt), Savannah Tindall (behind Chloe), Ericka Rivera (red shirt), Kayla Walston (behind Ericka), Emma Jo McAlliffe, Rebecca McCandless, Megan Magnole, and Caroline Murkey.

Students of the 2019 Editing, Writing, and Media Program in Valencia
The City of Arts and Sciences, located about 2.5 miles from the FSU Santiago Calatrava, a Valencia native, and Félix Candela designed the cultural and architectural complex, which opened in 1998. Several movies and television shows have used the location for filming.

From left: Jennifer Walker, Melissa Kindma, Kelly Rico (white shirt, green pants), Miranda Sullivan (behind Kelly), Emily Voytecek, Kamari Pless, Chloe Addleson (white shirt), Savannah Tindall (behind Chloe), Ericka Rivera (red shirt), Kayla Walston (behind Ericka), Emma Jo McAlliffe, Rebecca McCandless, Megan Magnole, and Caroline Murkey.

Melissa Kindma
Melissa Kindma enjoys writing and is passionate about the entertainment industry. She strives to pursue a communication career in New York City after graduation.

Emma Jo McAuliffe
Emma Jo is a junior double majoring in English (EWM) and sociology. Growing up across the East Coast, Emma Jo also enjoys her campus involvement, from working for the organization Power of We to serving in Student Senate. In the future, she hopes to work for nonprofits in Washington, D.C.

Rebecca McCandless
A Jacksonville native, Rebecca is a junior majoring in English (creative writing) and minoring in communication. With a huge bucket list in life, she wishes to teach English abroad through the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages program, write for National Geographic, and eventually write a novel. In her free time, she is either enjoying nature or snuggling with her dog while reading spine-cracked books.

Caroline Murkey
Caroline is a junior from Annapolis, Maryland, working toward a double major in English (EWM) and classical civilizations. She hopes to one day become a book publisher. When not doing homework or being involved with her sorority, Caroline enjoys spending time at the beach and with her family.

Aziah Pless
Aziah, who prefers to go by Kamari, is a senior English (EWM) major who will graduate in December 2019. Growing up across the East Coast, specifically Atlanta and Washington, D.C., she will take her talents to Los Angeles after graduation. Her interests include fashion, entertainment, travel, modeling, and writing. With her options open, she hopes to find a career to fulfill all of her passions.

Emily Voytecek
Emily is a junior from Jacksonville and she is currently an English (EWM) major. Emily is set to graduate in spring 2021, and she enjoys reading novels and drinking coffee in her spare time.

Jennifer Walker
Jennifer is a senior double majoring in psychology and English (EWM) with a minor in communication. With a passion for novel-writing in the passenger seat, she hopes to pursue a career in graphic design and editing. She can typically be found in bookstores, coffee shops, or following cute dogs around with her camera.

Kayla Walston
Kayla is a senior majoring in English (EWM) and minoring in education. After graduating, she plans to move to her hometown of Orlando, where she will earn a master’s of education from Rollins College. Her favorite things are cold brew coffee, traveling, and spending time with family.