

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA



Guillermina Loyola-Pelaez

Program: CEA Latin American Studies, Spring

Majors: Urban Ecology & International Studies

Earning the Community Engagement Badge: I took a Social Economy class at the Universidad de Belgrano that looked at the social, economic, and environmental responsibility of businesses and corporations after the economic crisis in 2001. We studied how Argentinian citizens, businesses, and the government were still reeling from and reacting to the crisis. We learned about workers who unionized and created a new model of "fabricas" (factories) that were run by, and even sometimes owned by, these very workers. I had the privilege of meeting the original workers who started this revolution. In this sense, my community engagement took the role of observe and listener. Meeting these men helped me reflect on the state of workers' rights in the USA and the immense power working people have when they come together and look out for one another. Understanding the economic power of international businesses (such as banks) helped me shape an outlook of accountability for corporations and better understand how employee engagement can change communities.



Earning the Language Immersion Badge: I took 3 classes in Spanish. One was an upper-level Gender Studies class, another was a Latin American Cinema class, and the last was an upper-level Spanish Grammar class. The language of instruction and all of the literature for my courses was in Spanish. Reading in Spanish helped me learn the language a lot. I also had to communicate on a day-to-day basis and live my regular life speaking Spanish. I had to speak Spanish at home and in every other interaction with the people of the city and country, from the airport to the dinner table. Speaking Spanish in different contexts taught me how relative language can be. I learned how communicating in a language shapes my relationships with others and the world around me.



Integrating My Transferable Skills at the U: I became a Peer Advisor for Learning Abroad when I came home. It has been a really special opportunity that has allowed me to put my own experience abroad into perspective for other students through outreach and conversation. I am one of the first faces people see when they come into the office, so I have a responsibility to be both positive and transparent with students about the requirements and responsibility that come with Learning Abroad. The most important skill I have gained is the ability to articulate my experience. I have learned to do this at a personal level with students and in a professional way. This articulation has helped me think of strategies and creative solutions for future Peer Advisors.



Guillermina posing next to a mural in her community.

“As both a Chilean and an American growing up in an increasingly interconnected climate, I learned to recognize myself as a global citizen...When I studied abroad in Argentina, I was constantly challenged to be more independent. Living within a different culture made me all the more aware of my own society’s influence on my personal values and perceptions.”