

Excursions, absences, and personal travel

The Cádiz global seminar experience is a once in a lifetime chance to experience a different culture in the context of an academic course of study. It is important to remember that this is foremost an academic program. This doesn't mean there will be no time to travel, go to the beach, meet people in social settings, etc., but it does mean that academics is the focus of the program.

Over the past years of the program, most students have taken time for personal travel and social events and successfully integrated these with the program. Occasionally, however, there have been problems– this is meant to provide some guidelines to avoid such problems.

Because this is an intensive program, it is important to remember that class sessions and course excursions are obligatory. This means you must come to class unless there is a legitimate reason not to (e.g. illness). You must also go on all the excursions – just because some of these are music festivals/performances, it does not mean they are optional.

Because of this, any unexcused absence may result in a grade reduction. A missed excursion counts as an unexcused absence (and some excursions are relevant to both courses, so missing them might result in a reduction for both courses). In addition, under some circumstances, unexcused absences may result in expulsion from the program.

Excursions are typically time sensitive – we may need to arrive in time to pick up tickets, etc., and as some of them involve a bus trip, or even a walk across town, it is important that we leave on time. The general rule is that we will wait 15 minutes for stragglers and then leave – if you miss the bus, it will be an unexcused absence. Classes are from about 10 AM to 1 or 2 PM, Monday through Thursday. Some of the flamenco festivals will be on Fridays or weekends and there will be a weekend excursion to Granada July 20-21. This means that weekends will not necessarily be free. I try to keep two free weekends, but, unfortunately, we don't know when the performances will be until we get there, so it is impossible to guarantee this, nor is it possible to say which weekends might be free.

Because of all of this, you may need to wait to make arrangements for personal travel. In the past, many students have gone on weekend trips and the API staff has helped with the arrangements – these trips have worked out very well.

However, it is important to plan wisely and not cut things too close. If you miss a required class or excursion because you didn't make it back in time (e.g. because of an unexpected travel delay), it still counts as an unexcused absence – have a back-up plan for delays!

Of course, many students travel before and after the program – there you have more time and greater flexibility.

While some of this may sound draconian, it is important to remember that this is an academic program and the academics are the reason for the program – the University is scrutinizing global seminars closely to make sure they are not really just ‘global vacations’.

For the past several years of the program the vast majority of students have had a great time, learned a lot, and had no problems at all!