



Faculty/college	Humanities
Level (bachelor's or master's)	BA
Name study programme	Taal- en cultuurstudies

Destination city & country	Los Angeles, California , United States of America
How did you travel to your destination?	Plane
Name university abroad	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Start date	23 / 09 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)
End date	13 / 12 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
How did you experience the exchange application process at Utrecht University?	Very easy. The process was easily accessible, there were many options and I felt like the requirements weren't too demanding. I did think the searching for the courses at the different universities was sometimes challenging, but that is not a problem of the Utrecht side of the application, though it is mandatory when applying. I though the written motivation was quite short, which is challenging when you have many reasons you want to study abroad, but it forces you to be concise.
How did you experience the counselling & support from the International Office?	Cathelijne replied quickly to all of my questions by email and was very informed about the course of action.
Did you do any language preparation? If so, what did you do?	No, I'm a native English speaker, so I didn't prepare for the Duolingo English tekst and passed with maximum score.
How did you finance your exchange?	Prefer not to say

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
How was the organisational process regarding your course registration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it difficult to find and/or change selected courses? • Can you say something about the language of instruction for the courses available? • Which courses did you end up taking?
How was the academic quality of the courses?	Finding courses at UCLA was a little challenging, because the course catalogue of the next academic year only appeared online after the application, whereas my main reason to attend UCLA was because of a specific professor. I contacted them directly, so I already knew the course in question would be offered. Due to a system glitch on the registration site of UCLA, I had been able to sign up for a course which wasn't being offered that quarter, but luckily I could quickly find a great alternative course, and was able to start the class the next day. The language of instruction was English. I took five courses: Art as Moral Action, Contemporary Chicano Theater, Arts in Communities, UCLA Chorale and UCLA chamber singers, though the last two did not count for UU credits.



Very good, and in my opinion the same level as at UU. There was more homework (readings mostly) but the level of the examinations (papers, discussion posts and midterms/finals) was very comparable to Utrecht. The grading was much more lenient than in Utrecht, which I found very interesting.

How did you experience the counselling & support from the host university?

Good, though I didn't have much contact with counselors from the host university.

STUDENT LIFE

How was the welcome & orientation programme?

There was a humanities welcome and a international students welcome, which were both equally informative. There was a new student orientation available, which was not mandatory for exchange students, so I didn't sign up for those. In week 0 of the quarter there were lots of activities, both informative as well as social, which is a nice way to start your exchange. Due to this week 0 programming, I would highly recommend attending UCLA for fall quarter rather than winter or spring, as the school provides more introductory activities at the beginning of the academic year.

How was the process of finding housing? For example, was it difficult finding housing, how was the rent, was it what you expected?

I applied to university housing and was placed in a university apartment with four bedrooms and 8 residents. The apartment was new (2 years old) and the rent was about 3500\$ for the whole quarter, which I did find very expensive - especially when you have to share a bedroom. I would recommend university housing, because the housing management is quite efficient and I almost always felt safe. When there were strangers in the buildings we could call campus security, even though the apartments were slightly off campus in Westwood.

What did you do for leisure & culture?

I took trips to San Fransisco/Bay Area to visit friends and spent a weekend in La Jolla/San Diego, went to museum and theaters in LA, went to the beach, concerts and operas, hung out with friends, attended a sitcom taping at the Disney Studios and even was invited to a film premiere in a fancy hotel!. It's very hard to get around in LA, the busses are quite dirty and don't feel very safe, and everything is far away. They are not finished building the subway station in Westwood, but hopefully once that will be done, it will be easier and faster to get downtown. So make friends who have cars! That makes life much easier.

CONCLUSIONS

Would you recommend this university/destination to others? Please explain.

I would definitely recommend UCLA for an exchange, because of the classes, the campus life, such as fantastic dining halls, sports and other activities. I had a great time there, and I loved singing in the choirs and I was also assistant stage manager of the UCLA Shakespeare company, which was a large time investment but nevertheless a nice experience. Living in LA was really not made for me and I felt quite locked up even though I was living in this huge city. The difference in wealth is devastating to witness (so much homelessness versus extreme wealth), but at UCLA there are students from all different socioeconomic backgrounds, which is nice.

Do you have any additional advice or comments for students who would like to go here?

If you are attending UCLA - I would HIGHLY recommend getting the meal plan. UCLA has the best dining halls in the USA and really, the food and the choice is quite fantastic!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	REBO
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Bestuurs- en Organisationswetenschap

destination city & country	Los Angeles, United States
name university abroad	University of California, Los Angeles
start date	10 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	10 / 01 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process requires a lot of work, but as long as you're on top of everything, it's fine. You first must be selected for UC in general by the UU, whereafter you can decide on your top 3 of desired campuses. I used the student reports to make this decision, just as YouTube videos about the differences between campuses. You will be placed by UC at a campus, based on your motivation, grades etc. It is possible you will be placed outside of your top 3, but in most of the cases this won't happen. As soon as you're placed at a campus, the visa process can start. Just do everything as soon as you get the required information, then you don't have to be stressed out in the end.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

For me, Cathelijne was the contact person at Utrecht University. We had a few preparation sessions and the contact with Cathelijne was easy in case of any questions.

academic preparation

I did not do a lot of academic preparation, before leaving for LA. If you start in September, you must choose your courses already in June. But you will be notified about this process by e-mail. It is a bit complicated to get an overview of all available courses, so make sure to start in time. I recommend enrolling for the courses as soon as enrolment opens, as courses get full fast.

language preparation

I had to do a Duolingo language test. Duolingo is considerably cheaper than the other tests (around 65 euro?) and was accepted by UC. Make sure to check which tests are accepted, as this might differ per year. Besides, I believe they take test scores into consideration with the campus selection, so try to do your best at the test.

finances

Of course, California is more expensive than the Netherlands. But eventually, it was doable and definitely worth it. The UCHA housing was almost equal to my housing in Utrecht. And the meal plan really saves a lot of money. So don't worry too much about that. Depending on how much you plan on doing trips/ travelling after the quarter, it gets more expensive.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I did not need any points for my bachelor anymore, so I could choose any course I desired. If you still need credits for your bachelor, you must make sure there's not too much overlap etc. Check that in advance. I took 3 courses (but 4 is also possible), with each one lecture and one seminar.



academic quality of education activities
In comparison to the Netherlands, I would say the academic quality is lower in the US. The workload might be more, a lot of papers and written assignments, but the grading is generous. The professors are very good and esteemed: the quality of the lectures was good. But the tests were just easier (graded) than in Utrecht.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The communication with UCLA was good. I did not need to communicate a lot with them, as everything was clear and well organized. But with the questions I had, the communication was easy.
transfer of credits
I did not need the credits anymore for my bachelor's degree. So, it was easy to transfer the credits. I just requested an official transcript of records and the UU exchange office and Board of Examinators transferred these credits to Osiris. You only must make sure you take courses at a sufficient level.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
I started my exchange at the beginning of a new academic year at UCLA. So, there was an entire week of orientation at the Campus. There were a lot of sport fairs and fairs for literally all social activities and clubs you can think of. UCLA has so many to offer regarding social life. So, it would certainly recommend exploring all possibilities during the welcome week. Furthermore, there were some mandatory online orientation trainings to follow.
accommodation
I decided to stay at the Coop "University Cooperative Housing Association", which made my time in LA unforgettable. Living in the Coop has two big advantages. (1) It is way cheaper than the official UCLA housing. I paid around 650\$ a month, including meal plan. The housing was decent, not extremely luxury, but comparable to my house in Utrecht. In return for this low rent, I had to work 4h a week in the kitchen, which was totally fine and a nice opportunity to get to know more people. The housing is just 5 minutes away from campus and only houses UCLA students (2) Living in the Coop is a real social experience and so much fun. There're a lot of international students, who are also on exchange, so it's easy to make friends. I already made a nice group of friends during my first days in LA, and I did everything with them for 4 months. So, I would really recommend living at the coop, as it's super easy to make friends and saves a lot of money (which you will really need in California 😊).
leisure & culture
There's so much to do on and around campus, in Los Angeles and in California. Westwood is a nice village, with all facilities close by and safe. LA is a very big city, but there's so much to do (even without a car!). You get a free public transport pass from UCLA, and everything is accessible by bus, though it can take long. Santa Monica, Venice Beach and Hollywood are 30 minutes away by bus. Some other parts of LA are a bit further away – but as long as you're in good company – it's pretty doable. During the weekends we often rented a car (which is cheap if you split the costs!) and discovered West-America. This was absolutely unforgettable. The nature in California is so beautiful and diverse. We went to a lot of National Parks, San Francisco, and Vegas. At the end of the quarter, I made a roadtrip through Utah, Nevada, and Arizona, and we went to Hawaii, as closure of the exchange experience.
suggestions/tips
Make sure you check your vaccination requirements. I did not do that and had to get some extra vaccines at the Campus Health Centre. When you have the UCship insurance that's free, but otherwise costly.



CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

YES. It is an amazing experience to study at an esteemed institution like UCLA and get to live in California. It was amazing to walk around on campus, as everything is so old and cool. And there's so much to do and discover in and around LA. It has been the best experience of my life.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Definitely go for UCLA! It is the perfect combination of academics, the real American campus feeling and a lot of discovering and traveling. UCLA/Westwood is in the best part of LA and close to the beaches, so the perfect base for your stay.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

destination city & country	Los Angeles, United States of America
name university abroad	University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)
start date	25/ 9 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15/ 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	Most of the things required to be done were quite straight-forward and explained in detail on the uu website. The application process took longer than for most destinations as you had to be first accepted to University of California and then your desired campus. I was lucky to get selected into my top choice. I put a decent amount of effort into creating writing the motivation and study plan, but I am not sure how much it affected my successful application.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	I attended the exchange-related meetings, however they weren't as useful. Possibly apart from a zoom meeting with older students who went to UCLA and were able to give more real-life advice.
academic preparation	None needed
language preparation	None needed
finances	I managed to get a good deal for accommodation and food so despite LA having a reputation of an expensive city my finances held up decently. The only thing that was more expensive were leisure activities, like eating out, parties, concerts and other events.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	I didn't manage to get into all the courses I originally planned on joining, however I found decent replacements. The replacement courses still satisfied the requirements of my programme.
academic quality of education activities	It was a big adjustment to a different style of teaching with higher emphasis on lectures, rather than seminars, however after couple weeks I was able to tune into it. Grading felt less strict than at UU, however classes were nonetheless challenging, especially if you were willing to go an extra mile and join your professors in office hours after class to further discuss topics from class. So, both if you just want to have fun and only pass your courses and if you want an intense academic experience UCLA will suit you.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	



None needed
transfer of credits
The process was pretty straightforward and quick. No problems here.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was quite a lot of events, however it might be overwhelming. If you don't manage to find your club during a big fest don't worry. You can always search up things online, on Instagram or ask around. Also, a lot of clubs give out free food during introductory meetings, so not only you can check different places out, you can have some tacos too.

accommodation

UCHA- Coop!!! If there is one thing you need to take from this report- this is it!!! Relatively cheap with breakfast, lunch and dinner included + snacks. Amazing community of people willing to work together and have fun. You will find friends here and will always be able to find people to hang out with. Plus, it hosts a lot of exchange students with priorities similar to you. The best people I've met in the US, were living with me at the Coop.

leisure & culture

LA is *literally* the place for this. Music, comedy, theatre, food, beaches, and national parks relatively close. It is so vibrant, and the sky is the limit (just make friends with a person owning a car). Both at university grounds you can join incredible events and of course everywhere else. Clubs and bars are something else, American sports are super entertaining even if you don't bother with knowing the rules.

suggestions/tips

Don't stress out too much about finding friends in the first few days. You will adjust, wear off the jet lag and find your people. You will have an amazing time, no matter what your focus is. If you don't like people and all the LA noise is too much you can always go camping in Yosemite or the Grand Canyon.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
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Absolutely, California in general will welcome you with amazing weather, chill people and all the entertainment you can wish for. Experience of a lifetime that will make you ugly cry on the plane home.

do you have any additional advice or comments?
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Apply and don't look back!



ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report

Contact info available at the IO.

faculty/college	REBO
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Rechtsgeleerdheid/Utrecht Law College

destination city & country	Los Angeles, United States
how did you travel to your destination?	by plane
name university abroad	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
start date	25 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I already knew I wanted to apply for studying abroad for as long as I could remember. I explicitly wanted to go abroad when I knew/trusted that Covid-19 would not be such a big deal anymore, and luckily this was the case. I wanted to go in my fourth year of studying at the university. At first I wanted to apply for going to Australia but having looked at when my semester abroad would start, that seemed not like the best move. Especially Australia did not align with my summer plans, so unfortunately, that plan had to go, but the UU has more than enough options. I quickly realized I also really wanted to go to the USA or Singapore. My first choice was Singapore, second UC (university of California) and thirdly Boston I would recommend thinking about the culture of the places you are choosing. Are you familiar with the culture/country? Do you mind not seeing your family and friends for a long time if you go outside Europe? What if you don't find housing? Are there any 'international student solutions'? These are important things to think about before you apply. I had been to the United States multiple times and Eastern Asia too. I started with my application early on, so I knew I had more than enough time to finish it. Since it is an extra minor for me, I did not really care as much about the courses, because they were not as important for my academic career. I did go in depth for my application, especially for the university of Singapore. I made my study plan and motivation letter. I had to wait until January until I heard back. I did not get an email saying I did not get in at the University of Singapore, but I got an email saying I got in to UC. After this email I could sort of start again with my application process because the application process for the universities affiliated with UC also require a lot. I think it is definitely worth it, but take your time, and start on time. Especially finding out the courses can be quite a time consuming process, especially with all the pre-requisites. Also the language test is important. I did the duolingo one and I would highly recommend it. After a while I heard that I got into UCLA: my first choice at the UCs!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I appreciated that the UU had some information market/moments where you could ask your questions. I did not use any help for applying for my exchange. I did wish they would keep more in contact with you



when you are abroad. Especially the first week is very overwhelming and I would have liked to have somebody from the UU reach out and ask how I was doing. I ended up doing completely fine, but you could feel a little bit lost. Also, a lot of things are not really discussed or explained. Such as housing for example. You can find a lot online, but you need to put in the work in order to 'research' everything. I do think that if you ask for more help, the UU would help, but I would have thought they would reach out more.

academic preparation

As mentioned before, I did this as an extra minor, so the courses I took were purely for my own interest. I did change courses in my first week because some of them did not live up to my expectations, which was completely fine. I took the following courses: introduction to American politics, introduction to globalization and Constitutional history of the US (up until the civil war). Especially the last course was a bit challenging at times because I did not have as much 'basic' knowledge about American history, but my professor was amazing and it ended up being my favorite course of them all. I would recommend taking courses (if you have the opportunity) that are a bit outside of your normal academic interest, but still interest you.

language preparation

As mentioned before I took the Duolingo test. I would definitely recommend practising before, just so you know what you can expect. I had a bilingual education so I was not super stressed about this part of my application. I took it once and a high enough score (155 out of 160). I am glad they also accepted this kind of test because I know the waiting times for the other tests are way longer. So do start on time to plan everything and practice. Do not stress too much, if you graduated from a Dutch High school, you should be fine.

finances

Since I knew for as long as I could remember that I wanted to study abroad, I have always saved part of my allowance/income (not always voluntarily). As soon as I applied to study abroad, and I knew it was really going to happen, I took a part time job and put all my income into a saving account. I would recommend saving a lot of money if you are planning on going to LA. Living costs are very high and also just getting around in the city and eating/drinking can be very expensive. It is worth it, but you need to be able to spend some money. I also applied for a couple of grants. One at my student association and the Holland scholarship. I was lucky enough to receive the latter, which did really help. Since the tickets can already be very expensive, try to ask you family members for money/part of your ticket.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

One very stressful moment was the enrollment appointment at UCLA. You get appointed a certain time slot when you have to enroll for your classes. I made a very specific study plan with all the course I wanted to take, but I heard from people that it was wise to also find some back up options. I am glad I did, because almost all of my preferred classes were already full by the time I had my enrollment appointment. Luckily, I was able to enroll in the class I really wanted to take (intro to American Politics) when the semester already started. That is one thing I would recommend; keep refreshing and checking whether somebody dropped the class, so you can still enroll. You can switch/drop/add classes until the second week. I dropped a history class because I disliked the topic (wrong era for me) and added a different one. Also, as mentioned before, I was able to enroll in the American Politics class. Just make sure you know which classes you want to take, and keep checking. People drop a lot in the first week, so it is possible you can still enroll, but just later on. Make sure you are enrolled in enough courses, in case you are not able to enroll. Also your weeks will be the exact same every week; same class room, same time.



academic quality of education activities

The academic quality is similar to what I would guess an applied science (hbo) level. It is very practical, a lot of reading and homework and not so much academic. It does differ per faculty and level of course but in general, the courses are not difficult. Do try to keep up with everything, because otherwise you might be overwhelmed at the end of the semester. People are very 'studious' in a sense that you should not be surprised to see people study on Friday and Saturday night at the library. UCLA is a very competitive school and people want to get the highest grades. I do like the fact that even the courses, such as an American history and American politics course, were accessible for non-Americans academically speaking. They did explain the basic stuff, and sometimes they recommended some videos which was very nice.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I received little to no counseling or support at UCLA. I also did not feel the need to have any support, because everything is quite clear.

transfer of credits

I emailed the board of examiners at the UU as soon as I knew I was not gonna drop/add anymore classes. It did take them my whole time abroad to 'accept' my courses, but I was not really stressed about it, because I already did a minor at the UU, so it was just extra. If you do not want to delay your study progress, I would suggest contacting the board before hand, with different study plans, because the chances of you getting the exact courses you want are slim.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

UCLA did a great job at welcoming the new students. I started when the academic year started so they had a lot of activities to get to know the campus, people, campus life ect ect. They also organised small activities per dorm building, which was very nice, so it was easy to meet new people. Additionally, Americans are very open and interested if you tell them you are an exchange student.

accommodation

I decided to try to get a dorm room and I would definitely recommend that to everybody. I met my best friends at the dorms and I loved living the 'real American college life'. Especially the dining halls are great. It is quite expensive, but it is worth your money.

leisure & culture

I went to the gym a few times a week. Additionally I went to a few museums. There is actually one on campus and one right off campus. The Getty is also just a 15 min drive. I went to explore the city every Friday with one, two or three friends. We all shared an uber, which made it more affordable. One of the best experience I had was going to the sport games. I really liked the basketball games and the American Football games, even though I am not really interested in sports. The atmosphere and the school spirit is something you need to experience.

suggestions/tips

Please live in the dorms. I know it is very expensive, but you get to meet so many people and really experience the American way of college/university. I met my best friends at the dorms and it was so much fun living and eat together. Also especially housing in LA can be very expensive and risky. I never felt unsafe on campus and seeing so many students every single day is great. The food is good (not excellent) but they have a lot of options to chose from. Also try to see as much as possible. LA is a enormous city and you cannot see everything but try to go off campus every week (I went out every Friday) and explore parts of the city. additionally, start on time with your vaccinations!



CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would REALLY recommend going to UCLA. It is an amazing school with great people and the accomodations there are great. Most is well organised, and the campus is beautiful. It is an expensive experience, but one you will never forget.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

A few of my recommendations are:

- live on campus in a dorm
- go to as much sport games as you can
- be outside as much as possible (the weather is amazing)
- talk to as much people as you can and go to as much fairs/orientation programme/dorm meetings as you can!
- save enough money
- Go to UCLA!!!

ERASMUS+ STUDIES - UU Report

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	REBO
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Economics and Business Economics

destination city & country	Los Angeles, United States
how did you travel to your destination?	By Plane
name university abroad	UCLA
start date	18 / 09 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	18 / 12 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The exchange application process of the UU itself is quite easy. The exchange application if you choose for the University of California takes a bit more time since you have to make a top 3 of campuses where you would like to be selected for. For each of these locations you have to come up with courses you would like to take.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The counseling and support of the UU is quite good, however for some questions you just need to contact your exchange university yourself. They are ofcourse not able to help you with all questions. The UCLA website has a message feature after logging in which really useful and they respond quite fast.
academic preparation	I did not prepare myself academically by taking on certain courses as a preperation. Do note that some courses require prerequisites such as econometrics, macro- and microeconomics and therefore it is quite usefull to pass these courses before going on exchange.
language preparation	My programm is taught in English at the UU. I did not need any language preperation.
finances	When looking at all the options to go on exchange to I was mainly interested in going to Canada, USA or Australia. One thing all of these destinations have in common in that they are expensive and that you cannot get an Erasmus grant on top of this, since these grants are only for European destinations. There are several grants which you can apply for but I was not able to get any. I worked during University in the Netherlands when possible and worked fulltime in the summer vacation. This was however not enough to cover all the cost. I lend money from the government. I did not receive any money from my parents and or grants and was still able to go. Allthough my student debt increased I had the time of my life in Los Angeles. For me it was really clear that I wanted to go to UCLA. When I was accepted I knew the money it will cost will be worth it. This is ofcourse different for everyone. That being said, for the location UCLA, one has a lot of influence on how much money the exchange will cost. You can save money on the insurance and the place to stay, either on campus or outside. More info on the accommodation can be found below. The place where I stayed costs about 700

dollars per month. The school insurance, UC ship, costs around 1200 dollars, but you can also opt for other cheaper insurances. My plane ticket was 1100 euro's since I chose for a flexible ticket, which turned out to be very useful. Cheaper flights start from 600/700 euro for a return flight. During the quarter I made a lot of travel plans for after the quarter and because of my flexible ticket I was able to put my return flight at the end of the grace period (30 days you can stay in the US after your programme ends). I did not calculate how much I spend in total but it was definitely more than 10k in dollars. However, I did almost every weekend a trip and went on many trips during the grace period. If you really want, without traveling, one can also go there and spend less than 10k in dollars. Especially, if you stay at the accommodation where I stayed, which costs about 700 dollars per month including food (breakfast, lunch and dinner). This meant that my daily cost of living + rent was lower than in Utrecht.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I had lots of problems forming my study programme. This because there are a lot of restrictions on which courses one can take because there are restrictions by the your home university (the UU) and the host university (UCLA). After emailing back and forth with both the student advisors and the exam committee numerous times I was able to form a study programme which I was able to follow at UCLA and the courses got accepted by the UU. There are some restrictions about which level of courses are allowed to take, herefor one should contact the exam committee and study advisors because not both of them have the same information. The exam committee makes the final decision regarding accepting the courses and is therefore important to contact early in the process. I was told not to contact them which caused some issues and stress. I did the exchange as part of my programme and therefore everything needed to fit in just right to graduate without delay. Eventually i took on four courses, each earning 5 EC, + a 2,5 EC intercultural learning course. This totals 22,5 EC. The missing 7,5 EC is going to be covered by the 3rd course I am taking in period 3. It was quite a puzzle but eventually everything worked out fine.

academic quality of education activities

I took 4 courses. For one of them the level was too low to the point where it got boring. The couldn't even answer a question I had on one of the slides she was presenting herself. It was a course of the environment department. If you look for an easy course than this is a good option, but academically it is definitely not. I took the following four courses: ASTR5 Life in universe + ECON111 Theories of Development (Economics) + ECON134 Environmental Economics + ENVIRON155 Energy & Society in Time of Climate Change. The astronomy course was the lowest level but definitely not the easiest one in terms of workload. But if you put in the work, the midterm and endterm are quite easy. The economics course theories of development was super interesting and really doable. Finally, the course environmental economics, turned out to be the hardest course I took. It was the most quantitative of all courses and had some overlap with econometrics. But if you use the office hrs, also this course is quite doable.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I had some questions about enrollment at UCLA. I asked them via the message center within MyUCLA and got an answer pretty fast.

transfer of credits

After sending the transcripts from UCLA directly (digitally) to the exam committee and IEO, I got an answer the same day that the courses are accepted and will count to my degree.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

UCLA offers many orientation programmes which are really fun. Also, during the orientation market every (sport) organization has its own stand and most of them have an intro week (or two) for free.

accommodation

When going to UCLA there are basically three options. 1) staying outside of the campus (really expensive, not necessarily nice and clean accommodation) 2) staying on campus (expensive, clean, but not as social as the 3rd option) 3) staying at UCHA which is a student run cooperation, just outside the campus on a 5 min walk. Because I am not an easy eater and wanted to get the real college experience I was looking into option number 2. But eventually the cost difference made me to choose option 3. It turned out that this was the best decision I made. The COOP, formally UCHA, is the best place to stay when studying at UCLA. Without a doubt. Some friends stayed on campus and I checked their room. To be fair, the room is more spacious and the furniture is newer and everything is a bit cleaner. However, staying there, is not as social as staying at the COOP. At the COOP the food was pretty good, it is of course not a 5 star cuisine, but I am a very picky eater and ate perfectly fine at the COOP. For every meal there are multiple options to choose from. There is always something you like. As discussed earlier the COOP is a lot cheaper than staying on campus, the cost difference is totals thousands of dollars. But even if the cost would have been the same I would still choose the COOP. This because, the COOP is the most social place where I've ever been. I am not the most social person but at the COOP everyone eats together every day. I just put my plate next to some people who looked nice to me and we started talking. A lot of people who I got to know were also exchange students from which also just started in the Fall Quarter. I would advise to go during the fall quarter since this is the first quarter in which everyone makes friends.

leisure & culture

The culture is different from the Netherlands. In my view it is a lot easier to make friends at school because it is much easier to get in contact with people. If you wear a nice hoodie it is likely that you will get compliments from strangers or classmates. Exchanging Instagram is also really common which makes it easy to stay in contact.

There are so many things one can do in their free time at UCLA. I joined the triathlon team for a few weeks and liked to go for a run around campus on my own. Next to this, there are many free sport games which you can attend like basketball, volleyball, soccer and American football. This is super-fun and definitely recommended to get the full American university experience. At the COOP there are also many social events like live concerts in the backyard, sing-along sessions in the music room and much more. At UCLA there is almost always an event on campus which you can join. Besides UCLA, within LA there is also a lot to do. Catching a bus to Santa Monica and watching the sunset while walking to Venice is something which never gets boring. Also a place which I definitely recommend going to is the Griffith Observatory. Once at daytime to do the Hollywood hike and for sure at night as well to get the best view of Los Angeles. Next to this there are numerous possibilities of traveling outside of LA. The best thing about staying at the COOP is that you meet other exchange students which are willing to explore Los Angeles and the US. If you stay on campus you are more likely to meet Americans which is also nice, but a lot of them don't feel the urge of exploring the US every weekend. I made friends at the COOP with whom I traveled to almost every must see spot in California. The nice thing about UCLA is that it is only a 15 min drive away from the airport LAX. At the end of the quarter I went to Hawaii which was a very easy trip since the airport is so close.

suggestions/tips

1. Be social. Even if you have a huge jetlag, just sit down somewhere in the cafeteria at the COOP next to people who you might like. The rest will come by itself.
2. Make use of all the events in the first weeks of the fall quarter. I went to these events with the friends I made at the COOP. It was a nice way to get to know each other better. Most people starting the fall quarter arrive alone and are exactly in the same situation as you. Desperate to get to know people. This is something you should keep in mind from the beginning since it can be a comforting thought.
3. If you are really struggling financially you can choose to work on campus at UCLA. You don't need a working visa to work on campus.

4. Don't take any courses which are taught on Fridays. For most of the courses which I followed, attendance was mandatory. If you want to explore California you need at least 3 full days in the weekend to go somewhere because traveling distances are not the same as in the Netherlands.

5. Be open to meet people different than you are used to hang out with. You are going to meet all kinds of people and in my case hang out with people of who I never thought to hang out with. Especially at the COOP it is usefull to be friendly to everyone because you will see them everyday, during breakfast, lunch, dinner and social events.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

For the reasons listed above I definetely recommend UCLA. It is the best choice I made in my life. Especially in combination with the COOP.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

N/A