

Chad Davis

### Study Abroad: Chile

During the spring of my junior year here at Wofford I got the incredible opportunity to study abroad in what is now my second home, Chile. I pretty much knew from day one of Wofford that I wanted to study abroad, but since I was a Spanish major, it quickly became a requirement. Therefore, I knew I had to study abroad in a Spanish speaking country that had health related classes to peak my interest. With both of these factors, it was an easy choice for me to choose Chile.

The IES program in Santiago is not only a great place due to its loving and caring staff, but also its variety of opportunities for students interested in health care. While I was in Santiago, I took 15 hours of classes. Three of them were with the IES program and one was a joint venture with IES and a local university, La Catolica. I took the mandatory Spanish class that all students have to take with IES and then an Art class that actually filled a general education requirement. My other two classes included medical Spanish and a Clinical Observation class. First and foremost, the professor for medical Spanish is one of the most amazing teachers I've ever had. She seems really difficult at first, but as your own Spanish level increases, the more you come to love her. I learned many things in this class, which I still get to use today.

My other class, Clinical Observation, was a very different experience. For the first 6 weeks, we learned all about the healthcare system of Chile, which I found extremely interesting. We covered all areas, including women's health to indigenous peoples' healthcare practices. After these six weeks of classes, we moved to the observation portion. It was during this time that I got somewhat frustrated. The goals of the class were never really clear and there were definitely communication problems that had nothing to do with our different languages. Overall it seemed highly disorganized. On top of that, we were expected to write a ten-page research paper in one month without any guidance and little access to resources and data. Although it may seem that I did not enjoy my time in the class, overall it was a good experience because I learned and saw so much. I got to watch surgeries and talk to doctors in Spanish about everything from vital signs, obesity problems and chronic respiratory diseases in infants. Although

disorganized, I learned a lot and got the opportunity to see the differences between Chilean and “American” healthcare.

That was just a quick overview of my health related classes, but I feel my discussion about Chile needs to include some of the most amazing parts of my trip. While there I got to experience things I had never done and probably never will again. I got the opportunity to travel all up and down the Chilean coast from Patagonia to La Serena and even to Buenos Aires, Argentina. I felt the power of the Earth with several *temblores* and met life-long friends from Chile and the United States. But most importantly, I met my second family. I now have a relationship that is so strong that I Skype with them at least once a week. My Spanish became so much better over my four-month stay, and I owe it largely to my incredible professors and also the amazing host-family that I had. To anyone who is considering traveling abroad, I have nothing but positive things to say. Not only will you grow as a person and you will look at the world from a different view, you also get to look at yourself from a different angle and discover who you are and what truly makes you happy.