

HAVANA, CUBA

LILIANA LULE

Program: UW Exploring Cuba Through Art, Winter

Liliana's Majors: English; Spanish; LACIS

Academic Life: During the course we were encouraged to interact with and explore the city we were in, as well as apply our major-specific knowledge to our interpretations to life in Cuba. UW Art professor Michael Connors brought in local educators to provide us context on Cuban history and life that we otherwise would not have access to, as well as his own art-based presentations.

Housing: There were six of us placed in a casa particular, which is a home that rents out rooms to tourists. Our host mother was the kindest person, and she provided up to two meals per day as a part of our program. We lived in Vedado, a neighborhood of Havana, which provided both comfort and immediate immersion in Cuban culture.

Benefits of Study Abroad: As someone studying LACIS, and as someone who plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Latin@ studies or some related field, I believe that living and studying in foreign countries is vital. Learning about cultures foreign to your own can only go so far when you're limited to a class space in the US. Actually interacting with locals and experiencing life similarly (though not the same) to them is an irreplaceable experience. I believe this program was a strong starting point to pursuing international-level fieldwork as I continue to pursue my studies.

New Perspectives: I believe this program has helped me become even more critical of how governments run. In Cuba there is a far different political ideology at play, and we were able to have a personal interaction with how so-called democratic socialism functions. Learning about and seeing how locals lived with and interacted with a "revolution" that is considered ongoing allowed me to reflect on how the US functions and what changes need to be made in order to live up to the legacy so often referenced.



Liliana and a view of Havana, from the Fortress of San Carlos de Cabaña.

**“Maintain flexibility
and approach the
culture with an open
mind.”**

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