

Homeland, Belonging & Diaspora in Puerto Rico Program Handbook Summer 2026

The Homeland, Belonging, and Diaspora in Puerto Rico program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with Viajes Caribe. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from Viajes Caribe as well as the **IAP Study Abroad Handbook** and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of publishing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

On-Site Program Information

Program Leaders

Your primary contact will be UW Program Leader, Professor Aurora Santiago-Ortiz, from the Department of Gender and Women's Studies.

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Program Leader

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Felix Alejandro Rodriguez Cancio

Program Assistant

frodriguezca@wisc.edu

Jan Diaz Hernandez

Program Assistant

diazhernande@wisc.edu

Viajes Caribe

The program is supported logistically onsite by Viajes Caribe, who will also be there to assist you and help you with any issues you may encounter.

302 J. Agosto Rivera, Urb. Roosevelt, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00918

Phone: 1-787-756-6720

Note: For San Juan phone numbers, the (1) code at the beginning of the number is only necessary for making a call from the US to Puerto Rico. If calling within Puerto Rico, you can skip the code and just dial the phone number. If calling to the US from Puerto Rico, add the code "011-1" before dialing the normal US ten-digit number.

Home University Contact Information

University of Wisconsin-Madison

International Academic Programs (IAP)

University of Wisconsin-Madison

301 Red Gym, 716 Langdon St.

Madison, WI 53706

Tel: 608-265-6329 Fax: 608-262-6998

Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

Ramona Washington

Study Abroad Advisor

ramona.washington@wisc.edu

Emma Hetzel

Study Abroad Enrollment Manager

emma.hetzel@wisc.edu

Emergency Contact Information

IAP Emergency Number

In case of an emergency, contact your on-site staff first using the emergency contact information provided on-site. For IAP emergency contact, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff member on call at **(608) 516-9440**. If you call the main IAP number after hours, the message will direct you to call the emergency number, so it's a good place to start if you're not sure about the time difference.

Emergency Number in Puerto Rico

European Emergency Number: 911

PROGRAM DATES

Online: May 18-May 31

Chicago: June 2-3

Puerto Rico: June 3-16

PREPARATION BEFORE LEAVING

Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for essential information. Be certain to read all of these materials carefully, as they answer many common questions about cultural, academic, and health matters abroad.

Immigration Documents

Passport

Because Puerto Rico is a US territory, you do not need a passport to enter.

Packing and Baggage

Try to organize and pack at least several days prior to departure so that you can judge if you'll be able to carry your bags (you must be able to do this). Also, by packing early you'll have time to rest before the long trip.

What are the baggage limits?

Each airline has individual requirements so you will want to be sure and check with the airline you have booked through to determine what your baggage limits are for your time in Puerto Rico.

Climate

San Juan may experience more rainfall and slightly cooler temperatures due to the Atlantic trade winds while Vieques may be windier with more frequent rain showers. May and June in Puerto Rico are warm, humid, and mark the start of the rainy season. Temperatures typically range from daytime highs around 87°F-89°F and nightly lows around 74°F-76°F.

Clothing

Plan to dress much as you do in the United States. The key is to pack lightly!

US students have often said they took too much clothing. Don't forget that nothing ruins traveling abroad more than having too much luggage, especially when you must carry it yourself. You can save packing space by coordinating your clothing so that shirts can be worn with different accessories and pants. Bring comfortable walking shoes as you will likely do more walking than you are accustomed to.

Toilet Articles

Bring with you anything you frequently use that may be specific and available only in the US like vitamins, products from special brands or medicines that require a prescription. Most toiletries will be available in Puerto Rico for approximately the same cost if you forget something, however we recommend bringing toothpaste, shampoos, soaps and conditioners so you don't have to buy them when you arrive.

Electrical Appliances

The electrical current in Puerto Rico is 110V, which is the same as in North America. Any electronic devices that you have should work without converters. The outlets are the same.

TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL INFORMATION

June 2 will be spent at the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture. One June 3 you will depart Chicago O'Hare airport for the group flight to San Juan.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Course Information

Puerto Rico's rich history is steeped in European, Caribbean, and African influence. In this course you will explore the cultural, historical, political diaspora of Puerto Rico and work to understand issues, topics, and themes related to Puerto Rican women and femmes from a feminist lens. You will also engage with a variety of mediums from film to texts to news articles that focus on gender issues within the Puerto Rican context. You will be invited to examine the ways Puerto Ricans have migrated and adapted to life in the US, particularly the Midwest and how migration to and from the archipelago has shaped Puerto Rican identity and history. The course will also focus on Afro Puerto Rican and Afrodescendant women in both the archipelago and the diaspora.

Learning objectives include:

- Gaining research skills in historical archiving, ethnographic research, participatory action research, and photovoice
- Engaging critically with Puerto Rican history
- Understanding the ways that diaspora, migration, and belonging influence or shape notions of home for Puerto Ricans

Registration

IAP will register you for a special "Study Abroad Course" for the classes you will be taking abroad; therefore, it is not necessary for you to register on the UW-Madison campus. This is a temporary registration, which will be replaced with the final grade and credit you earn after completion of the program.

Course Equivalent & Credits

To establish a UW-Madison course equivalent for your program course, you will submit a Course Equivalent Request (CER) through the Academic tab in your MyStudyAbroad account. You should use Option 1: Pre-Approved CER if you

wish to receive the pre-approved equivalent for the course, Gender and Women's Studies (GWS) 332. If you want to request a different UW-Madison course equivalent for the course, use Option 2: New CER.

You will earn 3 credits after successfully completing this course.

Pass/Fail

Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies. A Pass/Fail option will be available in the Course Equivalency Request. The due date for Pass/Fail submission can be found in the Academics tab of your My Study Abroad account. The due date for pass/fail is a hard one and exceptions cannot be made.

Grades and Grade Conversions

Your course will use the UW-Madison scale, and therefore, no conversion is needed.

LIVING ABROAD

Educate yourself about your host country. Read the Preparing to Live in Another Culture section of the IAP Study Abroad Handbook. Remember- it won't be possible to prepare yourself completely. There will be situations you will not have anticipated and your flexibility will determine in great part the kind of experience you will have while abroad.

Accommodations

Student housing in San Juan will have rooms with a set number of students, depending on gender. Each room will have a capacity up to 8 occupants, and rooms will be divided by gender. Student housing in Vieques will consist of single occupancy rooms.

Handling Money Abroad

The currency in Puerto Rico is the US dollar.

Health

All travelers should consult with their personal doctors before traveling abroad. The CDC currently recommends that all travelers are up to date on their routine vaccinations and should consider additional vaccinations such as Hepatitis A and Typhoid. You are encouraged to read through the Traveler's Health Information sheet from the CDC for Puerto Rico prior to departure and to make an appointment with either the [University Health Services \(UHS\) Travel Clinic](#) or your personal provider to discuss your upcoming travel. Make sure to schedule this appointment as soon after acceptance as possible to ensure that you have enough time to secure all recommended inoculations.

Safety information for Puerto Rico

Theft

You should:

- Keep sight of your luggage and belongings – especially when checking into hotels
 - Keep valuables in the housing in a safe or other secure place.
- Do not carry large sums of money, wear expensive jewelry, or obviously display valuable items (phones, iPads, laptops, etc.) when you walk on the street. Only carry the amount of money you need with you; leave credit cards, debit cards, and additional cash, etc. locked in the housing.
- Keep valuables securely on your person
- Avoid hanging bags or jackets on the back of a chair in restaurants
- Avoid falling asleep in public or on public transport
- If you are robbed, give the robber your possessions; do not resist.

Drink spiking

There is a risk of drink spiking, particularly for young women and solo travelers. Do not leave your drink unattended. If you are in a group, make sure you stay together. If you think your drink has been spiked, seek immediate medical help and contact the police.

Other General Suggestions about safety:

- Use common sense just as you would in any other big city. Do not walk alone at night, go with other students, and use public transportation recommended by Viajes Caribe onsite staff to get back to your housing.
- Go into a shop or ask security personnel for directions. Do not stop strangers in the street.
- Avoid exploring unfamiliar areas of town on your own.
- If you use a card (ATM, debit, credit), be sure to monitor your account closely for fraudulent charges. When using an ATM, it should be accessed only during the business day at large protected facilities (preferably inside commercial establishments, rather than at glass-enclosed, highly visible ATMs on streets).
- Report to the Program Leaders, any incident, harassment, or threatening situation that you may experience. They can assist you with filing a police report if necessary although it is highly unlikely that stolen items will be found.
- Know where you can reach someone in case of an emergency. Carry your IAP emergency card on you at all times.

Cell Phones

No, you generally do **not** need an international plan to travel to Puerto Rico if you have a major USnethernnet mobile carrier. As a US territory, Puerto Rico is included in most standard, nationwide, or North American plans, allowing you to use your phone with no additional roaming charges or international fees.