

PUEBLA, MEXICO INTERNSHIP/IMMERSION PROGRAM

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

SUMMER 2013

The Puebla Internship/Immersion Program is a unique opportunity to experience Spanish language use and Mexican culture firsthand. Designed as a capstone experience, the program was originally aimed at Spanish Education majors intent on receiving a significant teaching experience while improving their Spanish language skills. It has been expanded to include students from other areas of the university (e.g., Business and Marketing, Social Work and Criminal Justice, Political Science, TESOL, Theater and Music) who have studied Spanish at the intermediate level or higher or who are native speakers of the language.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The first five weeks of the program are centered in the city of Puebla, Mexico, two hours from Mexico City. Students will spend 20 hours a week in an internship/volunteer experience. For education majors, these experiences are usually in schools. Other internships have included Puebla businesses, the women's prison, the juvenile facility, orphanages and even a theater group. Students will also meet three days a week in a seminar covering Mexican Civilization in the broadest sense – including politics, society, culture and the arts. The classroom experience will be supplemented by activities throughout the Puebla community. A once-a-week option will be a Current Events class stressing Mexican politics and society. Students will live with Mexican families experienced in working with international programs. They will also be in constant contact with Mexican young people to avoid the all-too-often “herding” experience of groups studying abroad.

After a one-week hiatus – with optional travel to other cities in Mexico such as Oaxaca, Guanajuato and even safe beach communities – students will spend the last four weeks living with families in San Miguel Tzinacapan, a Nahua Indian village in the Sierra Norte of the state of Puebla. In all of these families, at least one member will have attended university but all still speak their native language and proudly support traditional customs. The emphasis in this part of the program is to learn about Mexican rural society – a major source of immigration to the United States. Each student will be involved in a specific project related to his or her career interests. Cuetzalan, the nearby county seat, is a city of 30,000 with banks, schools and medical facilities. It is possible to receive TESOL credit for this part of the program. See program options below:

Advanced Spanish Language Courses

- Mexican Civilization (taught in Spanish) 3 credits
- Current Events 1 credit

Internships (3 credits)

- SPA 450 for Spanish majors
- EDS 445 or EDS 450 for education majors
- TSL 450 for TESOL minors
- INS 450 (International Internship)
- [Department] 450

SAFETY

Puebla is one of the states in Mexico not included in the U.S. State Department warning for people visiting Mexico as tourists or students. It has had very little “narco” gang-related activity and is as safe as most major U.S. cities. Obviously, students must exercise the same precautions (especially at night) they would in visiting Chicago or New York – or for that matter, Milwaukee, Des Moines or the Twin Cities. Assistance will be provided in planning the weeklong mid-program break.

DIRECTOR

David Brye, Director of the Puebla Program, has lived and worked in Mexico since 1981. He has taught at the University of the Americas-Puebla, the University of Monterrey, and the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM). He is past president of the Association of Academic Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (AAPLAC). Before relocating to Mexico, he received his M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Harvard University and taught at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, for 16 years. He has created and directed many programs in Mexico over the last 15 years.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

- 2.5 minimum GPA
- For Spanish majors: completion of Spanish 303 or SPA 304 (or equivalent)
- For TESOL minors: SPA 202 (or equivalent)
- The desire to experience the world and receive academic credit for doing it!

All students will be required to attend a pre-departure orientation. The orientation will help you prepare for international travel in general and for the experience of visiting Mexico. Program alumni will be on hand to answer your questions.

PROGRAM FEE

The fee for the 10-week program includes the following:

- Tuition (6-7 credits)
- University and administrative Fees
- Homestay with meals, hotel, and meals on field trips
- Ground transportation from Mexico City to Puebla upon arrival
- Visit to Cuetzalan and San Miguel Tzinacapan (an indigenous village)
- Study-abroad health insurance (mandated by UW System)
- International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
- Study-abroad graduation sash

All program fees subject to change. (The Office of International Education will update [summer 2013 program fees](#) by March 15, 2013.) Valid for undergraduate Wisconsin residents only; out-of-state students pay Minnesota reciprocity or a non-resident surcharge. Financial aid is applicable.