Packing and Traveling

1. Specifically, what kind of linens did you need to bring?
   - None, they were provided in my home stay.
   - I didn’t pack any.
   - My host family provided bed linens. Something I wish I would have packed is a beach towel. The family of course had a towel for me to use, but I would have liked to have had a separate one for the beach.

2. What are you glad you packed from home?
   - A satchel purse (rather than an over-the-shoulder one), sunscreen (it’s really expensive there), two swimsuits (they are way more revealing there—I tried to go swimsuit shopping and the ones I liked were super expensive. You use swimsuits all the time so I would suggest bringing two), a brand new memory card, Spanish dictionary, and one sweatshirt, one pair of jeans, and one pair of sweatpants (it was FREEZING in Cusco).
   - My light blanket!
   - My drawstring bag, allergy medicine and other OTC medication, and a jacket.

3. What do you wish you had left at home?
   - Certain clothes—I never wore the khakis I brought, black slacks, or dress shirts. I thought I would be wearing these clothing items when we went and volunteered in the schools. However, we always wore jeans and tank tops when we went to the schools so these clothes never once got worn. Also, I brought too much athletic wear (the only time anyone wears athletic gear in Peru is to the gym).
   - Avoid close toe shoes—excluding tennis shoes.
   - Half of my clothes that I haven’t worn or the 3 pairs of shoes I’ve never worn.

4. Do you have any travel tips to pass on (planning advice, safety considerations, guidebooks, train vs. bus, etc.)?
   - Never get into a taxi alone. It is best to have a native with you when riding in taxis (especially towards the beginning of the trip). Taxi drivers will try to overcharge you once they see you are American. Also, if you are unable to have a native Peruvian with you, at least have one male in the taxi.

   Taking the bus really isn’t that much cheaper and it takes way longer. (The bus has to stop extremely often). Taxis are super cheap anyways so I would stick with them.
Make sure the carry-on you bring with you can double as a weekend bag. We went to Cusco for 4 days and Ica for 3 days and some people had to haul a suitcase around because that is all they had.

After you arrive in Lima and have gone through customs and immigration you are deposited out to this room that is packed full with people. It is loud and extremely noisy. Your host family will be holding a sign with your name on it. Unfortunately, my host family was late (as most Peruvians are) picking me up. The best thing to do is to not panic. After triple checking my host family was not at the airport, I found a place to stand near the entrance where people come in. Eventually, Dr. Aviles (the professor from UNK who went with us to Peru) was able to find me.

- Add your host family on Facebook so you can recognize them once you arrive in the airport.
- Pack plenty of sunscreen, you can buy it here but it is low quality and doesn’t work that well. Bring Ziploc bags because they will come in handy often. If you like to use notecards to study with they are not easy to find, so pack them from home. Don’t be afraid to ask for help, the majority of the people are nice just like in the US. People say don’t ride in the combi’s but they are just as safe as a taxi and much cheaper!

5. What places would you advise future students to see and why?
- Walking around Miraflores and Barranco (especially at night) is tons of fun (and it’s free). Within Miraflores is where the Indian Market is. This is a great place to get authentic (cheap) souvenirs for friends and family. Also, I would be sure to go to the center of Lima. Going to Cusco and Machu Picchu were included in our trip. If they are not in yours BE SURE TO GO. It was absolutely amazing.

I would advise the students to visit the national museum in Lima. It was amazing and I learned a lot. For a side trip I definitely advise them to take a trip to Puno to see Lake Titicaca.

I would definitely advise going to church at the cathedral in the center of Lima.
- The oasis in Ica, because it’s an oasis and it’s beautiful! Wait to go sand boarding there, so worth it!
- Visit the Amazon in Iquitos. It is a once in a lifetime experience that I am sure you will never forget! Parque de los Aguas, Barranco: Burrito Bar and discotecas, and Parque de las Leyendas is a great zoo to visit.
1. How did you meet other students?
   - When we arrived at UPC in January it was actually summer there and consequently, campus was deserted. It was really hard to meet people at first. We got really luckily and the first Thursday after class all the UNK students decided to play soccer together. There were actually students on the courts playing and those were the first friends we made. Also, a lot of students had host brothers/sisters that were students at UPC. This was awesome because if they invited you to some social outing they would also invite some of their friends from UPC so then you were constantly meeting new people.
   - You approach them at Starbucks or on campus.
   - At the college and through my host family.

2. How did you like to spend your free time and why? Is there anything you regret not doing more of in your free time?
   - At first I spent a lot of my free time cooped up in my room missing my life at UNK. This was the worst decision I could have made. Eventually, I decided it was time to branch out and began hanging around on campus after class and walking around POLO (a little mall) with other UNK students. It was super hard at first, but you just have to put yourself out there and embrace the experience. Don’t miss home too much because it will be waiting for you in four months!
   
     Also, I spent a lot of my free time with my host family. Looking back, I feel like this was an AWESOME decision. I was constantly speaking Spanish and they were always taking me to see new parts of the Peru. I also attended a lot of family get-togethers which I also think was an excellent decision. It allowed me to learn more of the culture and get to know my host family better. Now, I still am in constant contact with my family which is awesome knowing that I have amazing people in a foreign country ready to welcome me when I return.

   ***I would advise students to spend the least amount of time possible on Facebook or Skype or cooped up in there room. There are so many things to do in Lima (it is a city of 10 million!!!) Just walking around Miraflores or Lima was also a fun time!
   - Exploring, walking around town and trying new places to eat is how I spend most of my free time.
   - I liked to spend my free time exploring the surroundings with friends. We love finding hole in the wall cafes and having coffee or dessert. I regret not taking advantage of the beach more and also not travelling around Peru more besides on the university trips.

3. What opportunities for social, recreational, and cultural events that the host university or program offered did you like best? Why?
   - I loved both the trips the university organized for us. It was super fun to see a new part of Peru and to see one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Also, for each class we took
we went on a mini, one-day field trip. These were super fun because I was able to learn a lot more about the culture. (We went to a play, the “Real Felipe” museum, “Las Huacas”, and the United States Embassy.)

Also, students from UPC volunteered twice a week at an English conversation table specially made for the UNK students. These conversation tables served as a great way to meet students.

I thought the school visits to the high schools that UPC organized were really fun (however, I am an education major). All the teachers and faculty at both the high schools we went to were extremely nice and welcoming. It was really fun to be able to see how schools work in Lima.

- I enjoyed their recreational facilities.
- The university itself did not offer many options. Let Google be your best friend while you are abroad. There are so many options around Lima and they do not cost much to do. Be outgoing and try new things that you aren’t used to, you might never come back!

4. What piece of advice would you give future students regarding their non-academic life while abroad?

- Go out and do something every night during the weekends. Do not stay at home Skyping people from back home. Go to the discos, walk around the park, and spend the evening with your host family. Also, if you are with a group of UNK students, try to talk in Spanish as much as possible.
- Start random conversations with random people – they might be a potential social network.
- Do not let an experience get away from you. If you are afraid of being in financial trouble when you return, think of it as having bills the rest of your life. They are never going to go away and when will you have an opportunity like this again. Live each and every day like you are leaving the next morning. Of course studying is important, but experience the culture, and it will help you learn more than you expected to!
1. How did your academic experience abroad differ from your U.S. experiences concerning:

   Relations with professors/classroom instruction?
   - The relationships I held with my professors was very similar to my relationships with my professors at UNK. All of my UPC professors were extremely kind, nice, and welcoming. If I ever had any type of question, they were always willing to help me. Classes last three hours (with one fifteen minutes break); however, you will only have each class once a week. Teachers do not have their students buy textbooks for the class-the instructor prints off any needed materials. My three classes were a lot more laid-back and discussion-based.
   - There was one class per day with each lasting three hours. Pack a snack! The professors are very lenient and willing to work with you.
   - Peruvian time is no joke! They are always 10-15 minutes late, but most are willing to work with you. Just depends on the instructor.

Grading?
   - Grades are based on a scale of 1-20, with 20 being the best. Anywhere between a 15 to 20 is an “A”; anything below a 12 means you failed the class. You will still receive a number for your grade; however, the number will be converted to a letter grade on your UNK transcript.
   - Some professors will be good at keeping your grades updated, but a few of them will fail to do so.
   - Grading system is messed up here in Peru. It is on a number scale from 1-20 and I honestly cannot explain it more than that because it is confusing for me to understand.

Study habits?
   - We had a lot more group projects so I was working with others a lot more.
   - Get everything done by the Friday and then you are able to enjoy the weekend!
   - Study, study, study. But do it when necessary because you still need time to experience the country and the culture within it.

Library?
   - The library was HUGE. It had 8 floors. I used the 6th floor the most often because it had cubicles that held four people. This is where I typically worked on group projects. At the beginning of the semester it was easier to find an open cubicle (because it is summer and no UPC students are on campus). However, once school hits there are no open cubicles. You must reserve a cubicle either online or in-person in advance. The library/campus had WI-FI.
   - I liked it, but I prefer the open areas near the cafeteria.
   - Library is always full of Peruvian students. And the internet is terrible on campus once all the students begin their semester.
Computer access?

- I mostly used the wireless in my home stay. I would say having a laptop is a must. There is WIFI on campus in the classrooms. A lot of students lived a fifteen minutes plus walking distance from the school. Therefore, it was very time-consuming and inconvenient to constantly have to go to school in order to have computer access. Also, it is dangerous to walk alone at night so that would limit your computer time. A lot of us spent time in Starbucks on our computers.
- Good. Once their school year starts they get occupied pretty quickly
- Bring your own laptop. UPC has so many students and not enough computers in the library for who needs them.

What enabled/hindered your successful academic experience?

- What hindered my academic experience here was a couple of my Peruvian teachers. They never posted grades or even took grades for that matter, so that made it extremely difficult. What enabled my academic experience was the support from the fellow students and we had a great, supportive grammar teacher.
Money and Communications

1. How much money in U.S. currency would you recommend students have at their disposal for their whole time abroad?
   - I would recommend bringing no more than $100 dollars of U.S. currency. I brought two credit cards in case I lost one because it takes a while to receive mail at home. (Also, their mailing system is TERRIBLE. If you receive a package, the persons whose name is on the package must be present with their passport. Your host mom (or any family member) cannot take a package for you. The mailman normally came in the afternoon when we had class. All three times I received a package; I was in class when the mailman came. I then had to take the hour or so trip to the post office. Go through three to five different extremely long lines before finally being able to pick up my package.)
   - I would encourage students to bring $1,500.
   - $2,000. This is if you want to be comfortable and go out and experience things. Someone before I left said $500 and that was impossible for me to do. I also traveled to the jungle and a lot of other activities.

2. How much money did you have in foreign currency when you left for your program? Was it enough?
   - None, I simply used the ATM on campus and withdrew money after arriving.
   - $100. No I was able to withdrawal money later on.
   - $2,000 and it was enough for me to be comfortable and participate in the activities I wanted to do.

3. How did you manage your money (credit cards, traveler’s checks, bank accounts etc.)? How and where did you access your money?
   - I used a debit card to get money out of ATM’s. I used online banking to manage my checking and savings accounts. Do not bring any traveler’s checks because no one accepts them. I would suggest only withdrawing Peruvian currency from ATMs. (If you withdraw U.S. money then you already get charged with a foreign transaction fee on top of a fee to change the U.S. money to Peruvian currency.)
   - I would withdrawal from my debit card, but once I lost it I started using my credit card. I only withdrew from my credit card twice.
   - I managed my money by using my debit card and I did have accredit card for emergencies or if I needed it, but I never had to use it. The best thing to do which I didn’t figure out until later on is to go to the bank along the street called La Primavera and go to the bank called BCP bank. There you can take out US dollars and then go to Vivindas (which is a well-known supermarket also on La Primavera) and across the street there is a hole in the wall location to exchange US dollars to Soles. Ask them the exchange rate then exchange your money. This way you don’t have to withdrawal as many times. You’ll learn this is smarter, trust me!
4. How much money did you spend on:

Books?
- $30
- $70
- Only needed a book for the class with my professor from UNK.

School Supplies?
- $0
- $10
- Took supplies with me from the US.

Food?
- $200
- $300
- A lot. This is what most of my money went to because I liked trying new cafes and desserts. The desserts here are amazing!

Local transportation?
- $90
- $100
- Taxi rides can run you anywhere from 10-50 soles depending on your destination! Buses are safe to ride on and cheap so take them if you can learn to use the bus system!

Travel?
- $400
- $200
- $500, I took an extra trip to the Amazon which was well worth the money.

Personal items (toiletries)?
- $15
- $10
- Took toiletries with me from the US.

Entertainment?
- $50
- $600
- $900

Postage?
- $10
- None
- $20

Airfare?
- $1,200
- $1,200
- $1,200
Laundry?

- $0
- $10
- $0

5. How did you communicate with the U.S.? What would you recommend to future students (e.g. calling card, set up e-mail account and where, etc.)?

- I used mostly e-mail/Facebook/Skype to communicate with family and friends. I would not suggest buying calling cards because you won’t use them. Also, while in Peru I bought a super cheap (40 sole) track phone that came with 20 minutes. All UNK students ended up getting a track phone in Peru. It was way easier to communicate and it came in handy for safety reasons. It costs 1 sole for every minute you add to your phone which is super cheap.
- Skype with credit and Facebook.
- If you have a smart phone download the app Viber!! The other person also needs to have it installed on their phone. It’s a texting app that you can use over Wi-Fi. Also I communicated through Skype and Facebook.