

Mexico: Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca

Oaxaca, Mexico

Application due date: October 3rd

<http://www.uabjo.mx>

2008-2009

Program Information:

Language of Instruction: Spanish

Program Length: Short Term

Program Dates: January to March

Enrollment: Minimum of 5, Maximum of 15

Class Standing Requirement: Sophomore (8 credits) or Junior (17 credits)

GPA Requirement: Minimum of 2.5

**Language Requirement: Minimum of Spanish 201
Maximum of Spanish 202**

K Program: Approved for transfer of Kalamazoo financial assistance, scholarships, and academic credit.

Program Fee: \$12,722 (2008-2009); Includes tuition and fees, food and housing while classes are in session, some excursions, and round-trip international airfare from a designated point of departure. Does not include medical insurance, books, personal spending money, food or housing during vacation periods, or independent travel.

Housing: Homestay. Students live and eat with host families.



About the Location:

The city of Oaxaca, which has a population of 300,000, is the capital of the southern-most Mexican state of Oaxaca. Oaxaca is bordered to the south by the Pacific Ocean. Surrounded by the Sierra Madre mountains, Oaxaca lies in a fertile valley 5,000

feet above sea level. Over the years, these mountains have served to protect and preserve the cultures of the Zapotec, Mixtec, and other indigenous groups. The Aztecs dominated Oaxaca in the late fifteenth century and were the last indigenous stronghold before the arrival of the Spanish. Today, Oaxaca is the Mexican state most known for its rich mixture of indigenous peoples, customs, and languages.

Renowned as one of Mexico's most beautiful cities, Oaxaca has much to offer, be it colorful markets, local crafts, cuisine, or the number of museums, Spanish-style churches, and active arts community. Though blessed with tremendous natural beauty, the people of Oaxaca, encompassing a beautiful tapestry of traditions, values, and cultures, are her greatest resource and gift. According to Amy Allen (K'08) who studied in Oaxaca in 2006-7, "Oaxaca city is a perfect size, big enough to always have something to do and explore, and small enough to get to know your way around (both by busing and walking)." Monisha Berkowski (K'08) describes Oaxaca as "very different from the rest of Mexico. Having the largest indigenous population, it has its own culture, which is shockingly a lot less Americanized than you'd think. Mexican culture is so distinct and loud that it's a great experience. The city is a quaint, colonial city - small enough to be intimate and walk almost anywhere, but big enough to have "American things" (like a mall, movie theaters, Sam's Club). In terms of the program we learn so much about Mexican and indigenous cultures, classes are in Spanish, and you're really forced to learn the language. On a larger scale, U.S.-Mexican relations are so pertinent these days, it provides background and different point of view on these current events."

Students are eligible to participate in all activities sponsored by the Facultad de Idiomas and are encouraged to join local clubs and organizations.

To learn more about Mexico and its academic program, contact a CIP Peer Advisor in person or at cippa@kzoo.edu. They will be able to put you in touch with returned students who have experienced Oaxaca first-hand.

Program is geared towards but not limited to: History, International Area Studies, Anthropology and Sociology Majors

"Oaxaca is not just on the other side of Texas, it is located in southern Mexico (a part of Mesoamerica) and has much in common culturally with Central American countries. Some study abroad sites are very Americanized, Oaxaca is not."

— Amy Allen K'08



A musical performance just outside of the Santo Domingo cathedral in downtown Oaxaca. Photo provided by Amy Allen K'08

Questions?

Contact the Center for International Programs

Location: First Floor Dewing

Phone: 269-337-7133

E-mail: cip@kzoo.edu

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About the University:

Courses/Credits

Students on the Short-Term program must enroll in the equivalent of 3 K-Units of credit. In order to be counted as one K-Unit of credit, a course must be within the liberal arts tradition and have 40-45 contact hours. One K-Unit is equivalent to 3-4 semester credits. No partial credit is given. In cases where students must combine courses to achieve the minimum number of contact hours for a unit of credit, both courses must be from the same discipline.

The focus of the Short-term program in Oaxaca is local community development. Participants will explore issues of community and development within the city of Oaxaca and in the capitol, Mexico City, through coursework and field visits with the Union of Community Museums (based in Oaxaca). An anticipated field study in Mexico City will complement the local community focus as will a group service project in one of the local communities.

Courses typically include *Spanish Grammar and Conversation* (1 K-Unit), *Contemporary Issues in Mexico* (1 K-Unit), and *Community and Development* (1 K-Unit). Centro classes normally meet M-W, with Museums classes meeting Th-F. All courses are taught in Spanish. The field study and group project are required components of the *Community and Development* course.

Credit Transfer

Grades from all study abroad courses will appear on the Kalamazoo transcript but are not included in the Kalamazoo grade point average. Students must earn the equivalent of a C in the local grading system to receive credit for coursework completed abroad. Coursework and the ICRP must be completed and turned in before the end of the academic program or no credit will be given.

"People really do sell oranges out of their trucks, wear sombreros, and love their tacos, beer, and tequila. But some also drive BMWs and wear Louis Vuitton purses. However, you can't help being charmed by their laid-back, open and genuinely generous culture."

— Monisha Berkowski K'08

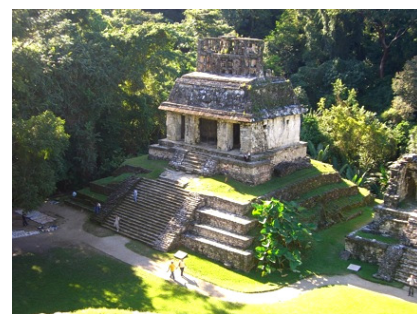


Puerto Escondido, a beach town on Oaxaca's coast.

Photo provided by Amy Allen K'08

The hospitality of the people — their desire to share their culture and eagerness to learn ours — was what I appreciated most about Oaxaca. I also really appreciated the climate. It's perfect — warm/hot during the day and cool in the morning and evening.

—Amy Allen K'08



Mayan ruins located amidst Chiapa's rain forests.
Photo provided by Amy Allen K'08

Courses approved for Cultures Credit: Mexican Civilization and Culture.

Advice from Past-Participants

Oaxaca loves its bright colors, fresh foods, arts and crafts, noise (fire crackers and cahuetes go off at all hours).

Our host families really engaged us into their lifestyles so that all of our free time wasn't just spent in our bedrooms or hanging out with the other K students, but actually living as Oaxacans live.

For fun I played basketball, went to salsa dance lessons, hung out with friends at bars and dance clubs, ate fresh fruit on the street while walking through the center, and traveled around Oaxaca.

Through our classes we visited several villages, some quite remote. In each village we intimately learned about their livelihood and the way their community government survives. Many of us did our ICRP in some of the villages (LT only). I worked on an organic farm with 3 Mexican women.

They were some of the most generous and giving people you'd ever meet. I think it's amazing to have a connection with someone so unlikely, even with a language barrier - it's a great part of study abroad. Oaxacans in the city were also quite friendly, and it was easy to meet people through things like salsa, class, sports, the bar, etc.

Another thing that makes Oaxaca different from the other Latin American programs is the host families. They aren't factories. None of them have had K students before, and this isn't just an extra income. They were like real families, went out of the way to take us places (I went on a trip to Mexico City with mine), hosted our friends, etc.

I played soccer and eventually basketball with other Mexican women, I had a gym membership.

This was a great way to learn about Mexican culture and meet people my age. Other activities which you can do are salsa lessons, cooking classics, ceramics. The program director is great at setting things up if you have other ideas I'm sure.

The beach on the Pacific coast also isn't too far away, which makes for a good short vacation.

There is something to be said for that connection of people from a completely different culture - no matter how little you think you have in common with them - you still feel the same emotions, etc. I guess that happens no matter where you study abroad, but I feel like I have a tighter connection with more natives than my friends on other programs.