



## South American Travel Seminar (Paraguay)- May 2019

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: Do I need to be studying a specific major?**

A: No. The trip is 1-3 credit hours under Liberal Arts & Sciences (LASI 398 travel seminar), but is designed to appeal broadly to students with a variety of majors, both undergraduate and graduate students. Any student wishing to learn more about South American culture, history, people and do service learning by volunteering in schools, will enjoy the trip.

**Q: Will we have free time?**

A: Yes. The instructor will provide many set activities for the group including tours, visiting some of the most remarkable sites, but students will also have free time during which they can visit other locations of interest to them and spend time with their host families. If you are not comfortable spending free time on your own, you are always more than welcome to accompany the instructor throughout the trip.

**Q: Do I have to know Spanish?**

A: No. We will have some language tutorial sessions before we travel, but these sessions will only provide a very basic vocabulary so that you can politely communicate in Spanish with a few simple phrases. The instructor is fluent in Spanish and we should have translators throughout most of the trip. For students who are learning Spanish, this will be a great way to have a full immersion opportunity and practice what you have learned.

**Q: What are the graded components of the class?**

A: The class is designed toward experiential learning. We will have multiple class meetings prior to the trip and attendance is required. During those class meetings, we will have some basic assignments and group projects to prepare for our trip and service learning. Additional requirements will be writing daily in a travel journal as well as participating in all of the daily activities, tours, site visits, etc. For the 3 credit hour course, there will be an additional assignment. Students will be provided with a syllabus in February with full details. This class is considered 2<sup>nd</sup> 8 week class from March 12<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be a few follow up meetings upon returning from the trip.

**Q: Can I participate if I am not a WSU student?**

A: Yes. The WSU admissions office allows non-WSU students to be admitted as "guest students". You will need to get admitted first and then, complete the application for the travel seminar. You can then enroll in the Travel Seminar course.

**Q: When do I enroll in the class?**

A: The Travel Seminar (LASI 398) is offered as a Spring 2019 2<sup>nd</sup> 8 week course. You can enroll for the spring 2019 semester for 1 or 3 credit hours depending on your preferences. The instructor will provide details.

**Q: What does the WSU program fee of \$1,880 include?**

A: The cost includes Airfare, in-country transportation, all lodging, most meals, culture activities/visits, tour guides, basic international/travel insurance, translators and WSU staff accompanying the group throughout the trip.

**Q: What is NOT included in the WSU program fee?**

A: Some meals will not be included. Most meals while traveling to/from Paraguay will be on your own, however most meals while the group is in Paraguay will be provided by the host family, except for lunch. Cost depends on how well you want to eat, although it is relatively inexpensive to eat out in South America. Most prices are comparable to the US (\$8-10 for lunch, \$15-20 for dinner). Plan on approximately \$160. • 1-3 credit hours tuition for Travel Seminar 398 • Passport (\$135 + photo) and visa for Paraguay(\$160 U.S. citizens). Processing time for passports is approximately 8 weeks. Go to [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) for more information. • Souvenirs and sundries (luggage, maps, phone cards, film) • Entrance fees to sites you want to visit on your own.

**Q: Do I have to pay the full price at one time?**

A: No, it is split into three payments. The first deposit to reserve your spot is \$400, due by Nov 1<sup>st</sup>. Second payment: \$1,000 is due December 1<sup>st</sup> and final payment: \$480 is due February 1<sup>st</sup>. Students will need to pay \$160 visa fee by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Q: Is money deposited refundable?**

A: The first \$400 deposit is refundable until Dec 1 when the 2nd payment is due. After that date, you are committed to the trip unless you can find a replacement for yourself and if airfare tickets have not been booked yet. (There are usually a few people on the waitlist, so if you cannot travel for any reason there might be someone who will take your place so you can get your money back, but there is no guarantee of this.)

**Q: Where will we be staying?**

A: In Asuncion, Paraguay, we will be staying with host families (generally, at least one English-speaker per family & many have had children who have studied at colleges in the U.S.). Generally, it will be one WSU student per host family. Students will stay in hotels (shared rooms) when visiting other cities in Paraguay.

**Q: Do I need travel or international health insurance?**

A: Your payment includes the purchase of Global Medical Emergency Coverage. This will cover you if you have a severe medical condition and will include immediate return transportation to the US if necessary. It is NOT travel insurance to cover lost luggage, cancelled flights, etc. And it is NOT an international health insurance. You should check with your own health insurance company to see what kind of coverage they offer when you are traveling abroad. You will be given details on the coverage that is included with the global medical emergency benefits during one of the pre-departure meetings.

**Q: How do I get the right kind of currency for my expenses?**

A: We will be primarily in Paraguay with at least one day visit to Argentina. With 2 countries, there will be 2 different currencies (Argentine peso & Paraguayan Guarani). The easiest way to get the right currency at the lowest exchange rate is to use an ATM machine. ATMs are everywhere just as they are in the US. The bank will handle the exchange and the only fee will be for the ATM machine. To avoid too many ATM charges, I would get out enough money to cover your expenses for several days in each country. Make sure you have enough money in your account to cover your expected (and possibly unexpected) expenses. It is also suggested that you bring some U.S. dollars and/or exchange some currency in Kansas (for Paraguay) before you leave for the trip if possible. Intrust Bank- downtown branch has both currencies available. I would only recommend getting currency for Paraguay in advance since we will spend very little time in Argentina. Perhaps consider getting \$50 exchanged to Paraguayan Guarani to take on the trip.

**Q: Can I use my credit card to pay for purchases?**

A: The simplest way to pay for your purchases in Paraguay is with cash. Unless you are making a purchase over \$15, many merchants will not take a credit card. If you do need to charge a purchase, MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted cards. I would encourage you to set a specific budget for your souvenir purchases and to stick to it carefully. You don't want to run out of money before you get back home! Be sure to contact your credit card company in advance to let them know you will be traveling; otherwise they might freeze your account thinking your card has been stolen. And do the same with your bank account for the debit card.

**Q: Where will we be eating?**

A: Breakfasts are included in the cost of the program fee and will be generally provided by your host family while in Paraguay as well as most dinners. Lunch costs are not included, so you will need to budget for this (a reasonable amount would be \$10/day). During our travel days and visits to other cities (approx. 6 days), breakfast might be included at the hotel and some meals will be provided on the airplanes, otherwise most meals will not be covered for those 6 days (a reasonable amount would be \$15 to \$20/day). You can eat cheap for some meals and save a bit for a nice meal occasionally. The meal estimate does NOT include the cost of any alcohol that you might consume.

**Q: What are the guidelines for alcohol consumption?**

A: We will observe the laws for whatever country we are in for legal drinking age. We are traveling to soak in the culture and a glass of wine is very much a part of the culture, so have a glass with your meal if you'd like. Several notes of caution: We will be very active throughout this trip and any actions that leave you incapacitated will make the trip much less enjoyable. If you are drunk, you are vulnerable, and you probably don't want to be vulnerable in a foreign country. Drinking can be costly and might result in running out of money.

**Q: Should I be worried about security concerns?**

A: I do not anticipate any serious security concerns, but urge everyone to use caution and common sense to avoid any potential problems. We will be traveling in at least one large city. You should always be aware of your surroundings and look out for the other members of our group. Always travel with at least one other group member if you are going out on your own during your free time or with your host family. Pick pocketing is a serious problem in a number of places, particularly riding on public transportation. You MUST carry your passport and larger currency bills in a hidden waist pouch or neck pouch. These can be purchased for a few dollars in the travel section at Wal-Mart, or online: See for example: <http://www.caribou.com/PassportPouch.html>

You should have a small luggage lock for your suitcase and should not keep any valuables in your backpack. If you are bringing a digital camera, hold onto it tightly (a fanny pack worn on your front is fairly secure).

**Q: How will we be getting around?**

A: We will be traveling mostly by private van/bus while in Paraguay. There might be a few occasions, when you use public transportation. This means that you want to make sure that you can comfortably carry all of the things that you bring with you. No one else will be helping you to transport your luggage, so pack sensibly. We will also do a lot of WALKING, so you might want to take some laps on the treadmill before we leave town.

**Q: Will my electrical appliances work in South America?**

A: South American plugs and electric current vary from the US (and from country to country). Converters and adapter kits can be found many places for approximately \$30. Office of International Education has plug adaptors available for purchase at approx. \$10 each. Most students would only need a plug adaptor since cell phones, laptops, and tablets can typically convert the electric current.

**Q: Is there internet connectivity available?**

A: Yes. In Paraguay, the host families should have wifi service that you can use free of charge and most likely we will have it during other activities/visits throughout the day.

**Q: How easy is it to call home?**

A: It is particularly challenging to find public pay phones and calling cards that work in South America. Alert your family members that 'no news is good news' and that they may not hear from you regularly (except by email). Our days will be full and it may be difficult to take time out of the schedule to call home often. Cell phones are very common, just like in the U.S. If you'd like to check into the feasibility and cost to use your cell service, check with your own provider. Some providers do offer service in South America at no extra charge; however you will need to know how to set that up. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND "UNPLUGGING" DURING THIS TRIP. Previous travelers have found it extremely enjoyable NOT to be linked to the world by a cell phone. They could enjoy the company of the group and immerse themselves in the sights and experiences around them instead of being at the disposal of an electronic device.

**Q: Can we do laundry there or do we need to pack for a full 2 weeks?**

A: Your host family in Paraguay should be able to help you find laundry facilities if you need them, however there will most likely be a cost. I would recommend that you pack enough clothes for the 2 weeks if possible as long as you can stick to one suitcase and one carry-on. Pack the essentials.

**Q: What kind of weather might we expect?**

A: The weather can be quite variable in May and June in Argentina and Paraguay. We may experience rain and 50 degrees, or sun and 80. In Paraguay, probably 70s to 80s for the highs, however lows could get down to the 50s at night and possibly only 60s during the day. You should have a flexible wardrobe that can accommodate these variations by packing clothes that you can layer.