Program: **ISA Spanish Language and Latin American Literature**  
Location: Heredia, Costa Rica  
Rank: Junior  
Major: Linguistics, Speech and Hearing Science; Spanish minor

“The academic portion of the program represents the overall objective of my experience. I took two classes at the Universidad Latina – Heredia that will transfer as Ohio State credit for courses required by my Spanish minor. The pragmatism of taking classes that fulfill requirements was the primary factor that led me to select this particular program. By completing this particular coursework sequence abroad during the summer, I will have more time to pursue higher level Spanish courses during subsequent semesters at Ohio State. Not only did the classes help me improve my Spanish, but I also got to undergo an extended period of immersion in a Spanish-speaking culture, which is essential to mastering the language.

I am planning to go to graduate school and become a speech-language pathologist or audiologist, with the hope of working with the Spanish-speaking population in the United States. This study abroad program helped me fulfill requirements for my language minor, as
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well as gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in the Spanish-speaking culture of Costa Rica. Mastery of both English and Spanish will enable me to be more flexible, creative, and accessible in my eventual career as a speech-language pathologist, especially with the ever-increasing Hispanic population in the United States.

This experience also had a tremendous impact on me personally. The independence that I took on in Costa Rica has carried over into my life at home. The philosophy of “pura vida” has stuck with me, as well. Costa Ricans use the phrase in many capacities, but it is essentially a reminder to live the “pure life,” to relax and appreciate all that life has to offer. At home now, I find myself thinking in that manner. I want to take advantage of everything I can, while not stressing about small things. I've learned to be more spontaneous - I don't need to obsessively plan every detail; I can trust that things will work out.

One of the best aspects of my experience was making so many new friends, both locals and fellow travelers. In the former group were my Costa Rican instructors, advisors, host family, and other students at the university. I also became particularly close with many of my American classmates. During the last weekend of the trip, four of us took an extremely spontaneous trip to Manuel Antonio, which is a national park known for its wildlife on the Pacific coast. It was a fantastic adventure in that we didn't have any details about the destination or any plan whatsoever beyond catching the bus out of San Jose. Somehow nothing went wrong; we made it to the bus station in plenty of time, despite insane traffic, and found a decent hostel when we arrived. The next day, we took a guided tour of the animal-filled rainforest, then spent hours on a gorgeous secluded beach before returning to Heredia with ease. I loved the sense of self-sufficiency and impulsivity it gave me, as well as the wonderful company and gorgeous setting.”