

# MADRID, SPAIN

SAMANTHA PIETENPOL

**Program:** WIP Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Fall

**Samantha's Majors:** Elementary Education, Spanish

**Academic Life:** With the exception of my theater class, I took most of my classes in classrooms inside of one of Complutense's university buildings. In theater, for the second half of the semester, we typically would meet in a theater or large space to start rehearsing for our final play. In my art history class, we would also go to the museum once a week to study the art first hand. I took all of these classes (Reunidas) with other American students, including students from California and Boston. However, my professors were all Spanish. Most of my classes were lecture style instead of discussion based.

**Most Memorable Experience:** One of the most memorable experiences from my time abroad was visiting with an elderly woman each week for my social changes class. We would always walk to the local cafe, get coffee and Spanish tortilla, and talk for a bit. We'd grown really close during my time there. I will never forget her.

**Cultural Differences:** One of the biggest differences between Spain and the U.S., in my opinion, is that Spaniards tend to be more relaxed and like to take their time. I noticed this the most when going for coffee or dinner. It's very uncommon to order carry-out. Instead, most people tend to sit down and enjoy their cup of coffee with a friend.

**Advice To Someone Considering Studying Abroad:** Try your hardest to embrace your country's culture and population. It's really easy to stick with friends from the U.S., but if you don't allow yourself to branch out, you won't be taking full advantage of your experience.



Samantha riding a camel in Morocco.

**“Studying abroad has helped me overcome prejudices that I didn't even know I had.”**

