

# Off-Campus Study Student Profiles

## Elyse Watkins

*Major: International Relations*

*SIT: Santiago, Chile*



### Program Highlights:

- Direct interaction with policy analysts, government officials, union activists, and community leaders
- Educational excursions and field studies throughout Chile for experiential learning
- A one-month long independent study project on a topic related to economic development and globalization in Chile

### *What courses did you take and how did you like your courses?*

The economic development and globalization seminar, in Spanish at the Universidad de Chile featured professors, politicians, and social leaders. Also, in addition to intensive Spanish language study, a field-study seminar develops research skills and prepares students for the independent study project (ISP). I got to meet many interesting leaders and officials at the lectures. A variety of different speakers kept things interesting and exciting.

### *What unique experience did you have that contributed to your Wooster education?*

I studied the effects of micro-credit on small businesses in the very small town of María Pinto for my ISP experience. I was the only American there and everyone was very curious about me. Staying in such a small town, where I felt comfortable immersing myself into the area and businesses, not only allowed me to do great research and interviews but also to really get a sense of the culture. During this time, besides occasional check-ins through phone or email, I was independent of the program and its directors. I really gained a lot of confidence because I learned that I could survive in a foreign country that speaks a language different than my own.

### *What specific advice would you give to other students?*

Go with an open mind. When you first immerse yourself into any different culture, especially one that speaks a different language, it can be very hard, intimidating, and frustrating. With time, you get used to it, i.e. hearing Spanish all around you becomes normal and the frustration and intimidation ameliorates. For this program specifically, do not plan on traveling a lot outside of the program. Besides the ISP month, you will not have time to travel.

### SIT: Economic Development and Globalization, Santiago, Chile

"This program explores the political, social, and geographic dynamics affecting Chile's economic development. Students examine industries such as forestry, mining, agriculture, and tourism to develop a panoramic understanding of how the global market and local and foreign policies impact Chile's export-driven economy."

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