

Lucy Jones

Graduation Year: Sophomore

College: Arts & Letters

Major(s): Spanish

Minors(s): Portuguese and Brazilian Studies

Scholar Group Membership: MSPS Scholar

Did you received other funding for this project?: ISLA

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance?

Project Title: Telenovelas and Their Influence on Love and Relationships in Northern Spain

Project Location: Oviedo, Spain

ND Faculty Mentor: Professor Jessica Collett

Project Type: Research

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Career discernment and/or preparation, Internationalize your Notre Dame experience

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Very Much

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Very Much

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: Very Much

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Very Much

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:Very Much

Tell us about your experience.

Over winter break, I studied telenovelas and their influence on love and relationships in Oviedo, Spain. Telenovelas are essentially soap operas with convoluted plots and dynamic characters. These shows are known for being overly dramatic and entertaining because of themes like divorce, infidelity, and romance that are often present in their complicated story lines. Through online surveys and semi-structured interviews, I was investigating the influence that these shows have on romantic relationships in current Spanish society. I hypothesized that the popular themes in the telenovelas, such as divorce and infidelity, are being transferred to its audience and are changing the ways that Spanish citizens are interacting in romantic settings. What I found was that Spaniards' romantic behaviors are similar to those of the telenovela characters and that there is a disparity in romantic patterns between soap opera viewers and non-viewers. However, this difference is contingent on many different factors such as social class, age, and the soap opera itself. Although my findings are not able to detect a direct influence of telenovelas on Spanish society, they set the groundwork for a much bigger project that I hope to develop further in the future. My research does not suggest that a single telenovela can influence an individual to change the ways he or she behaves in romantic relationships, but rather that telenovelas have an impact in the ways that people think about romance in general. Telenovelas and views of love and relationships in Spanish society are

important topics in today's culture and I intend on exploring them further as I continue my education at Notre Dame and beyond.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

My research over winter break was one of the most academically rewarding experiences I've ever had. After putting a lot of work into the pre-departure preparation, it was truly fulfilling but also challenging to come back with a project that I am incredibly proud of. My project in Spain was my first research experience, and I can honestly say that it taught me a lot about what it takes to be both a researcher and a scholar. In the pre-departure phase, I got a taste of the kinds of things you have to plan for when conducting a research project in a foreign country. I hadn't thought about things like sim cards or power outlet adaptors, which are things that ended up being really important in the completion of my project. While in Spain, I was exposed to some of the struggles of finding the right sample for my research during the busy holiday season. Luckily I was able to interview some amazing people and learn from their experiences despite the shortage of participants. Everyone that I interacted with on this trip, whether for research purposes or by coincidence, was incredibly welcoming and encouraging of my work. Spaniards seemed to be truly interested in my project and enjoyed talking with me about telenovelas and romance in Spanish society. Before this project, I didn't know anything about interview etiquette or how to even conduct an interview. Now that I was able to get my feet wet doing research, I realize that I now have a greater understanding of the research field and of my abilities as a student at Notre Dame. My project in Spain gave me the opportunity to interact with so many amazing people as well as taught me some of the ins and outs of being an undergraduate researcher, something that has changed my academic life forever.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

Prior to my project in Spain, I was considering using my Spanish major and becoming a language interpreter post-graduation. However, I had never done any work using my Spanish-English background that went beyond my Spanish language courses at Notre Dame before. With my research, I had the opportunity to get my feet wet doing translations and use my Spanish in a work-like setting. By having to interact with Spaniards, interpret what they were saying, transcribe the dialog, and then translate the data into English, I was able to get a taste of what it is like to be a language interpreter and I found that my desire to join this field of work one day was confirmed. I thoroughly enjoyed using my language skills for translation purposes and would not have been truly sure of this without my project in Spain. My research was not only an opportunity to study something that I'm passionate about, but also a chance to explore possible careers in the future.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

If there was one thing that I could go back and change about my research experience, it would be the way that I reacted to the unexpected issues that came up during my travels. Having been in Oviedo, Spain on previous trips and also having taken all of the pre-departure precautionary

