

UAB Summer School Return Report

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Introduction

I aspire to create cities where people from various backgrounds and cultures can harmoniously coexist. I believe that planning and designing urban spaces requires understanding diverse cultures, environments, and lifestyles rather than viewing a city through a single perspective. Therefore, I decided to participate in this short-term exchange program to step beyond domestic cities and spaces and directly experience urban environments and cultures abroad.

About Class

The class I took was **Videogames and Storytelling**.

In this class, I studied narrative techniques used in films, TV series, and games, analyzed practical examples through watching films and playing games, and ultimately applied these methods to write a script for either a film or a videogame.

Although the course content was unfamiliar at first as it was a field I had not previously experienced, it provided me with a valuable opportunity to engage in a new approach to learning. In particular, participating in classes alongside students from various countries revealed that people hold different ideas and perspectives on the same topic depending on their respective cultures and personal experiences.

Because the class consisted mostly of practical exercises and group work, I focused on actively communicating and studying with my peers—as I had planned in my application—striving not only to absorb the course material but also to share thoughts and perspectives. Discussing ideas with students raised in different environments taught me that approaches I considered familiar do not apply universally. This experience strengthened my conviction that when examining cities and spaces, we must consider the diverse perspectives and lifestyles of various people rather than evaluating them through a single standard.

Furthermore, taking classes and communicating in an English-speaking environment highlighted the importance of accurately understanding others' opinions and clearly expressing my own

thoughts, beyond mere linguistic fluency. Since expressions I used naturally in Korea could be interpreted differently in another language and cultural context, it was essential to listen attentively and verify underlying meanings throughout our conversations.

Through this comprehensive process, I gained a thorough understanding of various narrative plot devices—such as **seed/plant, MacGuffin, plot twist, Deus ex Machina, and climax**. By researching and analyzing real-world cases where these techniques were applied, I was able to easily grasp the specific roles these devices play in storytelling and the dramatic effects they create.

Life in Barcelona

During my program in Barcelona, I had the valuable opportunity to explore the iconic works of Antoni Gaudí, a world-renowned architect and the symbol of the city. Among Gaudí's most representative masterpieces are the Sagrada Família, Casa Vicens, Casa Milà, Casa Batlló, Park Güell, Palau Güell, and the Church of Colònia Güell.

Among these, I personally visited the Sagrada Família, Casa Vicens, Casa Milà, Park Güell, and Palau Güell. Walking through these spaces created by Gaudí, the thought that struck me most profoundly was, "How could anyone design and bring such a space to life, especially in that era?" The organic curves inspired by nature, the masterful use of light and color, and the grand yet meticulous architectural details harmonized to create a truly magnificent and overwhelming experience.

Furthermore, as Barcelona is a global destination teeming with tourists from all over the world, I had continuous opportunities to meet people from diverse backgrounds and naturally learn about various cultures. Throughout the program, I made a conscious effort to go beyond visiting tourist attractions and directly immerse myself in the local lifestyle and culture. Living alongside international students provided valuable occasions to discuss how people live and build relationships in their respective home countries, allowing me to naturally gain a deeper understanding of differing living environments and cultural dynamics.

The greatest takeaway from this short-term exchange program is the expansion of my perspective on cities and urban spaces. Previously, I tended to perceive and evaluate spaces primarily through the lens of the environment I had studied and experienced in South Korea. However, by living alongside and engaging in continuous discussions with students from various countries, I

experienced firsthand how the very same space can be interpreted and embraced in entirely different ways depending on an individual's cultural background and personal experiences.

Moreover, this experience reaffirmed the vital importance of communication and collaboration. Living and studying with peers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds required not only articulating my own thoughts clearly, but also actively understanding and respecting others' viewpoints. Through this process, I learned that achieving meaningful and impactful outcomes relies on the ability to bridge and harmonize diverse perspectives, rather than solely depending on individual competence.

I am confident that these insights and experiences will serve as an invaluable foundation for my future studies in Landscape Architecture and urban planning. The process of planning a city requires carefully balancing diverse stakeholder interests, lifestyles, and cultural contexts. Ultimately, the cities I aspire to create in the future must not be spaces designed for a select few, but truly inclusive and vibrant environments where diverse people can harmoniously coexist and thrive together.

Conclusion

This short-term exchange program was not merely a one-time experience abroad, but a defining opportunity to reflect on my future academic direction and personal growth. When drafting my initial application, my primary objective was to cultivate a broader vision and build the capacity to understand cities within multifaceted contexts. Throughout the program, interacting with diverse individuals allowed me to achieve and experience this goal firsthand.

Moving forward, as I continue my studies in Landscape Architecture, I want to further expand my perspective on spatial design. Rather than relying solely on Korean urban contexts as a baseline, I intend to examine how cities develop across different countries and how varying lifestyles shape them, thereby deepening my understanding of diverse urban forms. Alongside my core academic pursuits, I plan to seek continuous opportunities for collaboration and communication with diverse groups, honing my ability to exchange ideas and cooperate effectively in global settings.

Through this exchange, my conviction has been reinforced: building a city is not merely planning a physical space, but creating a harmonious environment where diverse people can live together. Going forward, I will continue to gain direct experience with different cultures and practice viewing cities through the eyes of the people who inhabit them.

