

Summer in the Bay Area

Program: UC Berkeley Summer Session D

Course: Public Economics, Special Topics in Sociology

1. Courses and Learning Environment

Studying at UC Berkeley was quite different, compared to my experiences at the University of Seoul (UOS). One of the most noticeable differences was the classroom atmosphere. Students were highly active, frequently asked questions and engaged in discussions enthusiastically during the lectures. Furthermore, the attendance was more generous and flexible, placing the responsibility of learning entirely on the students.

The highly accessible Office Hours system was another invaluable resource. Since it allowed me to comfortably visit the professor outside of the class to ask questions about challenging assignments or complex lecture materials, it helped me to keep up with the class without any difficulty, even as a non-native speaker.

-Public Economics (ECON 131)

During the summer session, I took Public Economics (ECON 131). The curriculum focused on the economic impacts of government intervention and policymaking. Key topics included the mathematical derivation of deadweight loss resulting from taxation, the design and selection of efficient tax systems, and the implementation of screening mechanisms to induce self-selection in welfare programs. Although the coursework was quite challenging, having a foundation in Microeconomics provided a sufficient baseline to keep up with the classes.

-Special Topics in Sociology (SOCIOL N100)

Another course, Special Topics in Sociology (SOCIOL N100), offered a fascinating perspective on urban issues, specifically focusing on the phenomena of displacement and rent burden. Instead of relying solely on theoretical textbooks, I conducted empirical

research during the class, by utilizing R programming to extract and process real U.S. Census data. Applying statistical programming to analyze real-world sociological data provided a practical and rewarding learning experience.

2. Accommodation and Campus Life

-Accommodation: Martinez Commons

During the summer session, I resided at Martinez Commons. I stayed in a double room: two students per room. One notable feature of this dormitory is that it offers both co-ed (mixed-gender) and single-gender floors. On the co-ed floors, residents share communal bathrooms, whereas the single-gender floors operate similarly to typical dormitories in Korea.

- Campus Life and Exploring the Bay Area

Beyond the coursework, experiencing the beautiful campus and the vibrant Bay Area was a significant part of my summer session.



Doe Library: As the primary study space on campus, Doe Library provided a classic and inspiring academic atmosphere. I spent most of my time here after classes, reviewing public economics concepts and working on assignments.



Memorial Glade: Located right in front of Doe Library, Memorial Glade is a perfect place where students gather to relax, read, or simply enjoy the California sun. Lying on the grass here was the best way to take a brief rest after intense study sessions.



The Campanile: This iconic clock tower is the centerpiece of UC Berkeley. Hearing the chimes ringing across the campus throughout the day created a dreamlike atmosphere.



Sproul Hall: Featuring a classic and grand exterior, Sproul Hall serves as the main administrative building for students. This is an essential place upon arriving at Berkeley, as it is where you handle necessary student services, such as issuing your Cal 1 Card (student ID card) and clipper card (transit pass).



Golden Gate Bridge (San Francisco): One of the greatest advantages of studying at UC Berkeley is that Berkeley is located near to San Francisco. Visiting the Golden Gate Bridge and exploring the city during the weekends was a memorable experience that balanced my busy academic schedule.

3. Conclusion

Overall, participating in the UC Berkeley Summer Session was an invaluable experience. It provided an opportunity to immerse myself in the dynamic, proactive, and intellectually stimulating atmosphere of an American university.

Moreover, studying and interacting with students from diverse cultural backgrounds broadened my perspective. Collaborating and communicating with people from various parts of the world was an eye-opening experience that went beyond the academic knowledge that I acquired in the classroom.

For these reasons, I highly recommend this program to University of Seoul students who wish to step out of their comfort zones and expand both their academic and cultural horizons.