

# Sarah Lawrence College in Cuba

*Handbook - Fall 2019*



## WELCOME!

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Sarah Lawrence study abroad program in Cuba! Our program has a proud history of a presence in Cuba since the fall of 2001; we're happy to welcome you into this tradition.

A part of that tradition is that our students begin the program prepared; whether or not you've devoted academic time to the study of Cuba, you'll want to be sure to do your preparatory assignments, and to read this handbook, designed to help you prepare. **Please make sure you copy the handbook onto your laptop and bring it with you.**

If you have questions the handbook doesn't answer, please don't hesitate to contact us at Sarah Lawrence. You can reach me at the numbers or email listed below; information on contacting the program directors appears on the last page here. All of us at the College will be eager to hear how your semester is progressing, so do keep in touch with us in Bronxville from time to time! I look forward to hearing from you (via email will probably be best once you're in Cuba).

Warm regards,

Prema

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## **INTRODUCTION**

You have the privilege of studying in Cuba at a time when local change is attracting global attention and discussions of the nation's future are intensifying. During your semester, you will become a part of ongoing transformations surrounding the formal restoration of diplomatic relations with the United States in 2014 after more than half a century. Since this restoration, new presidents have come to power in both countries, with policy implications that continue to unfold. Travel to Cuba has recently been limited by complex and sometimes bewildering US policies, while the Cuban economy continues to suffer from US economic sanctions. Even so, cultural ties between Cubans and US citizens continue to grow. This will be a new chapter of Cuban history—and one that is sure to be unique. ¡*Hay que aprovechar!*

Please read the entire handbook and take advantage of your resources before you go. The more time you spend talking, thinking, and hearing Spanish—especially Cuban Spanish—the better off you will be. Take time to explore your Cuban interests on the Internet: news, movies, YouTube videos, music and books are great ways to start. Meanwhile, consider ways to make your transition to Havana-life smooth and successful. Cuba does not have all of the resources that you may be used to, like infinite internet and excessive consumer goods. *Prepárate*. This handbook is designed to help you understand the particularities of the city, culture, and academic world that you will be entering. By

the time you arrive to Havana, you are expected to read through the entire handbook and plan accordingly.

### **A note on how to use the handbook—**

This handbook compiles both academic and social structures of the Sarah Lawrence College program in Cuba—including packing, city life, school, and program policies—to help you visualize your upcoming semester on the island and to answer questions. Please review the preliminary checklist immediately since some of these issues may require timely attention. Additionally, please look closely at the packing list, which is different than what you might consider for other settings—even in Latin America and the Caribbean. The other sections of the handbook serve as a guide for Sarah Lawrence students in Cuba. You may consider printing out certain pages to carry with you in Havana.

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## 1. PRELIMINARY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Is my passport ready? (Section 5.1-5.2)
- ☐ Is my cell phone “unblocked” for international use? (Section 7.2-7.3)
- ☐ Have I considered taking an art or music class? (Section 10.8)
- ☐ Do I want to consider taking a Spanish class? (Section 10.6)
- ☐ Have I spoken with my registrar about how my credits will transfer? (Section 10.3)
- ☐ Have I discussed my medication plan with my doctor? (Section 12.1)
- ☐ Have I updated and backed up my laptop? (Section 7, specifically 7.1, 7.4)
- ☐ Have I prepared my off-the-grid research? (Section 7.5)
- ☐ Have I set up the recommended apps, including *IMO*, and *maps.me*, and AlaMesa? (Section 7.6)

## 2. PACKING SUGGESTIONS

Our packing suggestions are based on recommendations from previous students after they had gone through the program. Although you do not need to bring everything on the list, **you are required to bring a laptop, a cell phone unblocked for international use, flash drives, and appropriate clothing to attend class.** At the end of the day, you are the only one who really knows what you need, so think about what you truly cannot live without. It is strongly recommended that you take everything we have listed into consideration, as certain items (such as handi-packs of tissues) may not seem relevant to you until you arrive.

Please be sure to check with your airline about baggage weight limits.

### Electronics (Section 7)–

- ☐ Laptop (7.4)
- ☐ External hard drive (7.1)
- ☐ 3-5 flash drives or more (7.4, 10.2)
- ☐ Cell phone “unblocked for international use” (7.2)

- ☐ **Portable charging Brick for cell phone** (7.3)
- ☐ **Drying silica packets** (7.1)
- ☐ **Nook or Kindle** (10.9)
- ☐ **Power Strip/Surge Protector** (11.4)
- ☐ **Plug-in adaptors** (11.4)
- ☐ **Flashlight/headlamp** (11.1)
- ☐ **Headphones** – *a few pairs is a good idea if you are a daily user, as they break down in the humidity; they are also great gifts!*
- ☐ **Portable Speakers**

### **Clothing (Section 11, 11.1, 11.6)–**

- ☐ **Casual clothes for home** – *You'll want to be as comfortable as possible* (11.6)
- ☐ **Nice clothes for school** – *Out of respect for our Cuban professors, you should always spiff up for class much like if you were going to work at a casual office* (11.6)
- ☐ **Going-out clothes** – *Night life in Havana carries a particular swing... you will likely visit various theaters, clubs, bars, and concert halls that have certain vibes and/or dress codes. Dress to impress!* (11.6)
- ☐ **Spandex shorts**– *To wear under dresses and skirts* (11.6)
- ☐ **Light rain jacket/poncho** (11.1)
- ☐ **Flip-Flops** – *To wear around the house* (11.6)
- ☐ **Nice sandals** – *You'll likely want more than one pair* (11.6)
- ☐ **Comfortable sneakers to walk around in** – *You'll likely want more than one pair* (11.6)
- ☐ **Sneakers for hiking and/or exercise** (3, 12.2)
- ☐ **Water shoes** (3, 12.2)

### **Personal Accessories–**

- ☐ **Seychelle filtered [Water bottle](#)** – *you cannot drink tap water in Cuba without a filter* (11.5)
- ☐ **Regular water bottle** – *larger is better, if it's a thermos MEJOR* (11.5)
- ☐ **Sunbrella** – *durable and compactable, for sun and/or rain* (11.1)
- ☐ **Bandana/handkerchief** – *pañuelo, used to wipe sweat off of your face constantly* (11.1)
- ☐ **Weekend-trip-sized bag** – *for overnight field trips that we will take as a group* (3)
- ☐ **Day to day bag and/or purses**– *That isn't necessarily your backpack, good for errands*



- ☐ **Bathing Suit** (9.5)
- ☐ **Beach towel** (9.5)
- ☐ **Sports equipment** – *Equipment is scarce in Cuba although pick-up soccer and basketball games are common. Having your own equipment is a great way to make friends!* (12.2)
- ☐ **Tourist Guidebook** – *Very useful for navigating the city on your own and discovering things to do!*
- ☐ **Ear plugs**
- ☐ **Lighters** (*for smokers, they are hard-ish to find*)
- ☐ **Gum and/or mints**

**School Supplies–** note that it is extremely difficult to find school supplies in Havana

- ☐ **Spanish-English dictionary**, *either a small book or on your laptop or phone.*
- ☐ **Art supplies/instruments** – *ESPECIALLY if you plan to take class at ISA* (10.8)
- ☐ **Backpack/bag that can fit your laptop** – *Messenger bags are often more comfortable in the Havana heat* (11.1)
- ☐ **Notebooks** – *Paper is very scarce, and students don't usually take their laptops to UH*
- ☐ **Day planner**
- ☐ **Pens/pencils**
- ☐ **Scissors/tape/mini stapler, etc.**

**Home Supplies–**

- ☐ **Pillow** (11.2) – *If you're picky about pillows, bring one. Four months is a long time.*
- ☐ **Small blanket** (11.2) – *in case you and your roommate have different AC preferences.*
- ☐ **Laundry bag** (11.2)
- ☐ **Collapsible closet shelf/hangers** (11.4) – *not every room has a dresser, so you may want to bring your own organization system if you don't want to be living out of a suitcase.*
- ☐ **Travel mug** (11.5)
- ☐ **Ice cube tray** (11.2)
- ☐ **Spices** (11.5)
- ☐ **Snacks/Granola bars** (11.5)
- ☐ **Tupperware** – *For leftovers, lunch, and late night snacks.*
- ☐ **Zip-lock and plastic bags are simply useful.**

## Hygiene Products—

- ☐ **Prescription medication** – *Four months' worth* (12.1)
- ☐ **Non-Prescription meds** – *Almost everyone gets sick at least once...* (12.1)
  - Ibuprofen
  - Tums/Pepto Bismol – *do **not** go light on the Pepto!*
  - Imodium/Colace – *Imodium is best in blister packs for on-the-go emergencies*
  - Emergen-C/vitamins
  - Cold medicine/cough drops
  - Yeast infection remedies
  - Neosporin
  - Musinex
  - Band-Aids
  - Aloe
  - Afterbite/hydrocortisone cream
- ☐ **Feminine Hygiene products** – *You can find pads in Havana, but tampons are more difficult to come by* (12.1)
- ☐ **Condoms/sexual health products, etc** – *Cuban brands are of lower quality to what you may be used to* (12.1)
- ☐ **Handy-packs of tissues & hand sanitizer**– *You will use them all of the time, since most bathrooms do not have toilet paper or soap. Bring a ton.*
- ☐ **Sunscreen, bug spray** (11.1, 3)
- ☐ **Stain remover** –*Like Tide to Go* (11.2)
- ☐ **Tiny forgettable toiletries** - *Fingernail clippers, tweezers, nail file, Q-tips, mouthwash, floss, hair ties, Bobbi pins... etc.*
- ☐ **Face cleansing/acne products** – *If you've ever gotten a zit in your life, you'll probably break out. Bring extra, you will likely wash your face a few times a day. Many students have wished they brought face masks, blemish spot-treatment, personal washcloths, and grease-blotting pads to help manage breakouts.*
- ☐ **Contact lenses and contact lens solution** – *A 2004 student suggests bringing enough disposable lenses to last the semester; the tap water destroyed her permanent ones.*

## Gifts/Fun—

- ☐ **Gifts** – *You'll likely want to give friends, caseros, and professors going-away presents when you leave. Consider bringing a few things from your University or thank you cards. Good examples are flash drives, gum, lighters, headphones, extra feminine hygiene/condoms, key chains or other trinkets from your city or University.*
- ☐ **Games and cards** – *With an emphasis on cards & dominos!*

### **3. ORIENTATION**

Your first days in Havana will include a tour of the neighborhood, including instructions on public transportation, changing money, the difference between Cuba's two kinds of currency, getting to know the other students in the group, and settling into your *casa particular*. Your first weekend will be spent in [Las Terrazas](#), an eco-reserve community about an hour's drive west of Havana. There, we will have workshops with Cuban professors on local flora and fauna, and related environmental projects, as well as relax in the cafés and forests while getting to know each other. The rest of orientation will include a combination of practicing *Cubano* Spanish and attending field trips around Havana with a Cuban Spanish professor. We will discuss the various academic options available for you in Cuba, and you will make a preliminary course selection with the program director. Come prepared to talk about your individual research project ideas, as you will be discussing them in Spanish! We will finish the week with our first class together at CEDEM.

### **4. SEMESTER CALENDAR**

Friday, August 23	Students arrive in Havana by 5pm.
Saturday, August 24- Sunday, August 25	Orientation trip to Las Terrazas
Monday, August 26 – Saturday, August	Orientation activities, including language classes, advising and registration, University of Havana
Monday, September 2 –	Classes begin at University of Havana

Friday, September 13-                Trip to Matanzas  
Sunday, September 15

Friday, October 5-                Trip to Santiago  
Sunday, October 12

Friday, November 15-            Trip to Trinidad  
Sunday, November 17

Saturday December 14 Students ***must*** vacate housing and depart for airport

***NOTE REGARDING FAMILY VISITS:*** See Section (14.4) for policies on family visits. Visiting your student may be illegal under US law. Sarah Lawrence is not responsible for travel decisions made by families and friends of students. Additionally, if you choose to visit, please be considerate of your student's intense academic schedule, (especially around Thanksgiving), and don't ask them be a full-time tour guide.

## **5. LOGISTICAL PREPARATION**

### **(5.1) Passports—**

All students must have a valid passport to obtain a visa to enter Cuba. Your passport should be valid for a minimum of six months beyond your stay. **Please check the expiration date to make sure your passport satisfies this requirement.** Also, be sure the passport, especially the photo, is in good physical condition—that is, it does not look in any way as if it has been tampered with. **Please bring 10 photocopies of your passport (of the inside page with your photo and personal information) with you.** When you arrive in Cuba the assistant director will collect your passports and put them in the program safe for the duration of the semester. **Always have a copy of your passport with you.**

### **(5.2) Visas—**

Students are travelling directly to Havana on their own but will receive academic visas via mail. At the airport, you will fill out a form to declare the reason you are travelling to Cuba. This is a sheet that

lists the twelve approved categories for Americans to travel to Cuba. You will need to check the box stating that you are travelling to Cuba for academic purposes towards the completion of a degree. Sarah Lawrence will also provide you with a letter indicating that you are studying in Cuba with our program and will be covered abroad on GeoBlue International Health insurance— **do not neglect to print out these letters and travel with them.** If you encounter any issues at the airport, please call Prema Samuel at 914 395-2305, or Jesse Horst at 011-5-263-6153 (if you have international calling on your cell phone).

### **(5.3) Arrival-**

Once arriving in Cuba you will be met by a program taxi driver with a sign reading “Sarah Lawrence College.” Please look for the driver as soon as you exit customs. If there are any issues, ask someone at the airport to call Jesse Horst at 52636153. Our address is **Calle E #158 e/ Calzada y 9na, Vedado.** You will be notified in advance if there are any other students from our program on your flight to share the taxi.

## **6. WHAT TO EXPECT**

Cuba is a relatively poor Latin American country with a complicated political structure. Spaces of socialism, communism, and capitalism overlap in ways that can be unpredictable. Partly due to the continuing US economic embargo, Cuba lacks many resources – don’t expect to be able to run down to CVS and buy extra deodorant if you run out. As North American students in Cuba, you occupy an uncommon social position in this matrix—somewhere between tourist and resident.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s, one of Cuba’s principal sources of income has become tourism. Many tourists come to Cuba for the same reasons they come to other islands in the Caribbean: for *sol y playa*, and/or to drink rum and sleep with the locals. Every Caribbean nation has to struggle with this dynamic of being used as a playground for foreigners while local economic conditions are extremely difficult – Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Place* and June Jordan’s “Report from the Bahamas” provide great introductions to this issue. It is important to remember that although you are a guest in Cuba, you are not a tourist. Your drinking habits, your sexual life, and your balance between work and play are crucial points of consideration. You are an

American student representing Sarah Lawrence College that has come to learn about the complicated culture, history, and dialect of Cuba – not to jump around on the playground.

## **7. LAPTOPS & CELL PHONES**

### **(7.1) Consider the tropics—**

Please be aware that tropical conditions take a toll on electronic equipment. Mysterious computer malfunctions are more than possible, and there are relatively few low-cost possibilities for fixing equipment in Havana. Computers function best in cool, dry atmospheres, which in Havana are few and far between. Bring [drying silica packets](#) to put in your laptop bag or case, and asking your local computer expert before you leave about maintaining your laptop in high heat and humidity. Bring a back-up hard drive and use it early and often, particularly with your academic work. It is also a good idea to leave a backup at home, or update your data in the *Cloud* to secure your information in case of hard drive malfunctions. **Note: in accordance with Cuban customs and regulations, you cannot enter the country with more than two hard drives. Any extras will be confiscated. Do not pack hard drives in checked-luggage.**

### **(7.2) Phones—**

All students **must** arrive with a **cell phone “unblocked for International use”**. If you are unable to “unblock” your cell phone, please bring a burner phone that is “unblocked for International use”. Upon arrival you’ll be given a Cuban SIM card that you will use for the duration of your stay. It is program policy that you have a cell phone; it is for your safety and not optional. You will be required to keep your cell phone on and charged at all times to receive important messages from the Director and Assistant Director. Please check with your cell service provider before you leave to **make absolutely sure that the phone you’re bringing is unblocked**. Upon arrival you’ll be told your Cuban cell phone number, through which you can receive calls from the United States at no charge to you. We

recommend that parents load their student's Cuban phone number with credit at [www.habla.cuba.com](http://www.habla.cuba.com) under "mobile recharge" (7.6). For information on loading your Cuban number with phone credit and keeping in touch with home, see Section (7.6).

### **(7.3) Bring a smartphone—**

In general, Cubans use their smartphones instead of laptops to connect to the Internet, take photos, listen to music, and watch videos. You will see iPhones and Androids almost everywhere you go — especially now that 3G is available for purchase in Cuba since January 2019. (We will go over how to purchase 3G packages during orientation.) If you are planning on using your smartphone, it can be a good idea to bring a small charging brick. As anywhere else in the world, it is important to be aware of your surroundings and to exhibit culturally appropriate behavior so that you do not become a target as a result of these items. While your residence is located in a safe neighborhood, carrying around expensive items carries an inherent risk. Sarah Lawrence is not liable for items that are lost or stolen. If you lose your program SIM card, you will be expected to pay \$40CUC to replace it.

### **(7.4) Bring your laptop and several flash drives—**

Almost all class readings are given out on flash drives, and you will be expected to read them on your computers. You will turn in most of your work via flash drives, so keep them safe and bring more than you'll think you need (we recommend you bring around 5 flash drives with at least 8GB of space each). Avoid bringing ones that are only compatible with Mac computers, since nearly everything in Cuba is formatted for PCs. They are also nice things to leave as presents when you go! Please update and back up your computer before you leave, as you will be unable to download any software updates for the duration of the semester.

### **(7.5) Plan ahead—**

- ☐ **Reach out to your email provider.** A lot of school emails — especially those that run through gmail — don't work in Cuba. Just to be safe, forward your school email to another email — @gmail.com will work, but @gm.slc.edu will not!
- ☐ **Figure out semester deadlines in advance**, such as housing registration, class registration (for non-Sarah Lawrence students), thesis proposals, job or internship applications, or any other deadlines you may not think about until later on in the semester. Download necessary materials and give your passwords to a trusted friend

or family member to help you turn in things in on time since you may not be able to access certain sites through the Cuban internet.

- ☐ **Research & Applications** – If you know you will have any research to do for thesis proposals or internship applications, do it before you leave. Research can be stressful in Cuba – things like JSTOR and online applications websites will likely not work in Cuba.
- ☐ **Spotify** – note that in the past many students have been unable to use their Spotify accounts to full extent while studying on the program. In some cases, music has been deleted after 30 days, and in other cases it has rather been difficult to download new music. In Cuba music mp3s are shared and passed around on flash drives with ease, so don't worry about not having anything to listen to.

### **(7.6) Stay connected–**

Texts are the cheapest way to communicate within Cuba at \$0.09/text, whereas local cell phone calls are about \$0.35/min. From 11pm to 7am, local cell phone calls cost \$0.10/min. International texting costs \$0.60/text, and you can call the United States for about \$1.10/min. Receiving calls is free on your cell phone from anywhere internationally.

In Cuba, cell phones often work like pagers. To save money, people will often call each other on cell phones and hang up after one ring to let the receiving end know that they are calling. This is called a *llamada perdida*, or a lost/missed call. In many instances, it is a way of saying “hey, call me back!” (as opposed to using \*99, see below). In other instances, it is a way of saying “I’m here”, “I got home safe”, “I’m thinking of you”, or “call me back on the land line (from yours)!”

There are a variety of ways to stay connected with home, and to save money doing so. Please make sure that you not only download the recommended apps, but ***set them up as well*** – many require a confirmation code that is sent via text message that you will be unable to resolve in Havana.

- To call a Cuban cell phone from the U.S., dial “**011 - 53 - 5** \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_”
- To call the U.S. from a Cuban cell phone, dial “**001-** \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_”
- To check your *saldo* (balance) on your cell phone, dial \*222#
- To pass *saldo* to a friend, dial \*234# and follow instructions (the *clave* is 1234)
- To call a Cuban cell phone from Cuba, dial: “**5-** \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_”



- When you call somebody on your cell phone, you are charged (the receiving end is not). Note that if you call a cell phone from a land line, you must first dial 0, then 5.
- To call a Cuban land line from Cuba, dial: “7- \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_ ”
  - When you call a cell phone from a land line in Cuba, the receiving end is charged (you are not). Try to avoid calling a cell phone from a land line as much as possible.
  - For this reason, it is customary to ask for people’s land lines (“fijo”, “numero de casa”), and to call a land line from a land line as much as possible to save money. When somebody answers, simply ask, “*me puedes poner con [nombre]*” or, “*puedes ponerme con [nombre]*”
- If you need to call a cell phone from your cell phone and you do not have any money on your phone, dial: “\*99-5- \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_ ”
  - Calling a cell phone from a land line is the same as using \*99.
  - This does not work calling the United States.
- To purchase a 3G package, dial \*133#, and follow instructions.
  - 600MB = \$7CUC; 1GB = \$10CUC; 2.5GB = \$20CUC; 4GB = \$30CUC
  - All 3G packages are valid for 30 days.
  - To check the status of your 3G package, dial \*222\*328#
- The 411 (operator) in Cuba is 113; to ask for a number, you must have the approximate address as well as the name of the institution.
- To call the police, dial 106; to call an ambulance, dial 104. Note that in the case of an emergency, you should notify either Jesse or Zoe immediately.

### **Apps to download and set up before you go:**

- ☐ **Maps.me** is the most important app you can download before your trip to Cuba – it works exactly like GoogleMaps, except you do not need to be connected to the Internet or have access to data. Note that you must not only download maps.me, but also specifically download “Havana, Cuba” before arriving to Cuba.
- ☐ Transportation in Cuba is by no means intuitive. **Habanatrans** is an app that will help you check transportation routes throughout the city. This app is not yet available for ios, but you are able to use a web version [here](#).

- ☐ Download the app “**IMO**” to your smartphone – and tell your friends and family to do the same! This app functions like FaceTime or Skype. Note that video software such as FaceTime, Skype, and Google chat are all very unreliable in Cuba, and generally do not work through the Cuban bandwidth. IMO is the cheapest, most effective way to call home. (Viber will work for audio calls if set up prior to arrival). For more on IMO, here is an article describing its function: <http://www.havanatimes.org/?p=112977>
- ☐ The app “**AlaMesa**” is the Cuban version of Yelp for restaurants and will be very useful to you. After the first quarter of the semester, Friday and Saturday meals will be cancelled at the residence and students will be required to explore the city to find dinner on their own. You will be reimbursed up to \$20 with receipts for these two meals. With AlaMesa, you will be able to find hundreds of local restaurants on your own, and review photos, descriptions, price ranges, phone numbers, and addresses.
- ☐ **Conoce Cuba** – this app works like Cuban Yelp for restaurants *and* local businesses. It includes maps, reviews, descriptions, and contact information.
- ☐ **WhatsApp** – now that 3G is available for purchase in Cuba, many locals have converted to using WhatsApp to communicate. To use WhatsApp you will need to purchase a 3G package, however, will likely save money in the long-run staying in touch with family, Cuban friends, classmates, and fellow group members.
- ☐ **VPN** – in the past, students have often benefited from downloading a VPN (virtual private network) for their devices. This tricks the internet into thinking that you are online somewhere other than Cuba, making it possible to download apps and search for things that are otherwise blocked from inside the island.
- ☐ **Zapya** – this app works like AirDrop for iPhones, but works with all devices. In Cuba, it is very common to share data with friends through Zapya, such as music, photos, videos, apps, and even PDF’s! (This is a GREAT way to make friends!)
- ☐ Although there are many options for gym memberships in Havana (the cheapest and most popular is just four blocks from the residence!), if you are used to daily exercise, you may

want to download some **fitness apps** to your phone that don't require internet to use. Note however that you may need to download certain exercises on the internet in order to use them offline, like with Nike Training Club.

- ☐ It is also a good idea to download a Spanish translator and/or dictionary app, as well as a unit conversion app.

### **Apps for friends and family:**

- ☐ **“Rebtel”** is an app that allows people in the US to call Cuba via local rates. Rather than spending upwards of \$2USD per minute, Rebtel has a rate to call Cuba for \$29.90USD for 50 minutes (to be used within one week), or \$32.50USD (to be used within 30 days), about \$0.59 per minute. Note that offers change and expire, so be sure to do a little research within the app to make sure you're getting the best deal.
- ☐ **“Ding”** is an app that is used to load money onto your Cuban cell phone, which functions as a re-loadable pay-as-you-go phone. Note that you will be able to purchase calling cards on your own in Cuba, however these expenses add up fast and will cut into your semester's budget dramatically.

**There is also the option of “recharging” phones without apps.** Simply visit [www.hablaCuba.com](http://www.hablaCuba.com) and click “mobile recharge” for more information. Note that roughly once a month there is a “double recharge” (sometimes even triple!) where, for example, sending \$20 will put \$40 onto account. It is a good idea to set up an account to receive notice of these offers. Students can also easily purchase recharge cards in Cuba.

- **Emergency Calls in Cuba:** if your phone doesn't have any money on it, or if you need to get in contact with someone and don't have your phone for some reason, there is a way of asking to borrow someone's phone without the obligation of them having to pay. If you dial \*99 before the number, the receiving end will pay for the call. If you need to ask someone to borrow their phone, you can simply say, “*por favor, ¿puedo prestar tú móvil para llamar con noventa nueve?*” or, “*usted no paga*”.

- **Emergency numbers in Havana, Cuba:**

- **Ambulance:** 104
- **Fire:** 105
- **Police:** 106
- **Hospital Cira Garcia:** 7-204-4300
- **Poison Control:** 7-260-1230
- **Lost Luggage:** 7-642-6172

- **Internet hotspots:**

- Internet park on Línea y L
- Internet park on Línea y H
- Hotel Presidente (Calzada y G, Vedado)
- Internet park on Paseo y Malecón (Vedado)
- Outside of Hotel Habana Libre/La Rampa (23 y M, Vedado)
- Hotel Nacional (21 y O, Vedado)
- Hotel Parque Central (Prado y Neptuno, Havana Vieja)
- Hotel Riviera (Prado y Malecón, Vedado)
- Hotel Inglaterra (Paseo de Martí y Neptuno, Havana Vieja)
- Outside of Universidad San Gerónimo (Obispo y San Ignacio, Havana Vieja)
- Internet park Fe del Valle (Galiano y El Boulevard, Centro Habana)
- (And many more!)

**NOTE:** Don't expect Internet access where you live. You can save money by composing your emails at the *casa* and taking them to the Internet facility on a flash drive. You should be prepared for the fact that this may be the most un-wired four months of your life. You may be able to find something positive in not being able to go on line ten times a day, but then again, you may not. Be flexible! Tip: if you use Spotify offline, you will have to connect at least once a month to not lose your music!

## **8. MONEY**

NOT SO VALUABLE



### (8.1) How much money should you bring?

Cuba is a cash-only country with two types of currency. We recommend that you carry the personal cash you expect to need **in US dollars**. We do not recommend using travelers checks, they are rarely accepted. U.S. (and some European) credit and ATM cards will not work in Cuba. You will need money for a semester's worth of lunches, personal transportation, entertainment, trips you do on your own (such as to Viñales), cell phone and internet use (although you can have this paid for you from home), and gifts to take home. **The average amount past students have spent of their own money in the course of the semester has been \$1000 - \$2000, although there has been considerable variation.** In order to avoid running out of cash at the end of the semester, devote some time to thinking about your budget before you leave, and bring a little more than you think you might need.

### (8.2) Cuban Money and Conversion Rates—

There are two different types of currency in Cuba: the **Cuban Peso (CUP)** and the ***Peso Convertible (CUC)***. Distinguishing between the two types of money can be confusing, as both currencies can be referred to simply as “pesos”, and are marked with the “\$” sign. Both are also colorful, although CUCs tend to be a bit *more* colorful and flashy. *Pesos Convertibles* are generally understood as “tourist money” and therefore pay for “luxury items”. *Pesos Cubanos* comprise national salaries, and therefore pay for “necessities”. In some cases, you will pay for things in CUCs (“say-oo-say”, or “kook”s), and other times you will pay *a lo Cubano* in CUPs (“moneda nacional”, or MNs), depending on your purchase. Learning the differences is key.

In general, Cubans will assume that you understand the way that the double currency works. When you ask how much something costs, they will usually just say “cinco pesos”. If you hand them \$5CUC (worth about 5 bucks) when what you’re buying costs \$5MN (about a quarter), it is possible that they won’t correct you. “Pesos” refers to either type of money, so pay attention! **Do not exchange money with people on the street even if they are in line at the CADECA; it is illegal.** You will learn how to exchange money at either CADECAS (Casa de Cambio) or at hotels (you cannot exchange for *moneda nacional* at hotels). Note that money with any type of tear in it is also not usable in Cuba. Be aware – sometimes people will try to dump their ripped money on foreigners. Ripped money is often not accepted and must be taken to a bank to be exchanged.

### **(8.3) Converting Money: CADECAS–**

Cadecas are the official currency exchange houses of Cuba. The exchange rate is the same everywhere on the island so don’t worry about getting a better rate in a different part of town. **Don’t forget to bring a photocopy of your passport any time you want to change money or engage in any kind of bank transaction.** Although U.S. dollars can be exchanged for CUCs at almost every hotel, at Cadecas you can exchange for both CUCs and *moneda nacional*. There are several Cadecas around the city, some of which are listed below.

- Línea y A (Vedado)
- Calle 19 y B (Vedado)
- Inside the Melía Cohiba hotel (Paseo y Malecón)
- Calle 23 e/ K y L (Vedado)
- Obispo #257 e/ Cuba y Aguiar (Habana Vieja)



- Amargura y Oficios (Habana Vieja)
- Oficios y Lamparilla (Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, Habana Vieja)

#### **(8.4) Breakdown of Double Currency–**

**The Peso Convertible (CUC)** is often referred to as “say-ooo-say” or *dólares*. Made for luxury items, with CUCs you can pay for private taxis, anything at a hotel, WIFI and phone cards, all private bars and restaurants, and anything made for tourists. The exchange rate is 97% to the US dollar, however there is a 10% tax to exchange, making the actual exchange rate 87%. This 10% tax may disappear by the time you arrive to Cuba, but don’t count on it! Click [here](#) for more information. Therefore, \$1 USD = \$0.87 CUC, or \$1 CUC = (roughly) \$1.15 USD.

**The Peso Cubano (CUP)** is known as *moneda nacional* (MN), or *peso cubano*. This money is used to purchase “necessary items”, such as collective taxis (*máquinas*), food at the *agro* market, newspapers, cultural events (with *carne*), entrance to museums (with *carne*), books, etc. \$1 CUC = \$24 MN. Under Cuban law, you may pay with either CUCs or CUPs for any transaction.

\$1 USD = \$0.87 CUC	\$15MN = \$0.75 CUC
\$1 CUC = (roughly) \$1.15 USD	\$20 MN = 2x \$0.50 CUC
\$1 CUC = \$24 MN	\$24 MN = \$1 CUC
\$1MN = \$0.05 CUC	\$25MN = \$1 CUC
\$2MN= \$0.10 CUC	\$30MN = \$1.25/\$1.30 CUC
\$3MN = \$0.15 CUC	\$50 MN = \$2 CUC
\$5MN = \$0.25 CUC	\$100MN = \$4CUC
\$10MN = \$0.50 CUC	\$120MN = \$5 CUC

Depending on where you are exchanging between CUCs and CUPs, such as in *cafeterías* or *máquinas*, the double money is considered in different ways. For example, if you pay for your *máquina* ride (which costs \$10MN) with a \$1 CUC bill or coin, the *chofer* will give you somewhere between \$13-15MN in change. However, if you pay with two twenty-five cent coins, there will be no change! Why? \$1CUC (bill or coin) is counted as 24 Cuban pesos. However, in a *máquina* or at a *cafetería* the double money is considered differently: \$0.25 CUC is worth \$5MN.

In Cuba it is appropriate to tip about 10% for restaurants, taxis, and all other services. However, this is not a standard like it is in the U.S., so you may simply leave your change at a restaurant, or give a few extra CUCs to other people that you work with. If you use a public restroom that has a person sitting outside of it handing out toilet paper (which is very common), you may give them as little as 5 or 10 cents per visit (or one peso Cubano).

Note that if someone is selling coffee on the street for \$1, it is \$1MN (likewise if you see someone selling a newspaper, feel free to buy one! They cost \$1MN, but you can also give them \$0.05CUC). If you buy a coffee in a restaurant (not to be confused with a *cafetería*), it is usually \$1CUC. We will go over the difference between *moneda nacional* and CUCs in more depth during orientation. For more information, click [here](#).

### **(8.5) Didn't bring enough money?**

In the event that you need more money during the semester, it is possible for parents to send money to Sarah Lawrence, through the Dean of International Programs, who will notify the program director, who will provide an equivalent amount in CUCs. (This is not an instantaneous or foolproof process, so best to plan ahead, as per 'think about your budget' above.) It is also possible to wire money into Cuba via **Western Union**.

#### **Western Union locations in Havana:**

- (Vedado) Galerías de Paseo
- (Vedado CADECA) 23 e/J y M
- (Nuevo Vedado) 23 y 24
- (Playa CADECA Centro de Negocios) 1ra e/70 y 80 Edificio Santa Clara

## **9. GETTING AROUND**





The University of Havana is walking distance from your *casa particular*, but to get to certain classes or cultural spaces beyond your neighborhood of Vedado, you will need to take public transportation. With minimal public WIFI and shaky, expensive roaming capabilities, your first-world navigation tools will not always be available to you. With no Uber, Google Maps, or subway system to navigate invisibly, it can feel intimidating at first to get the swing of public transportation in Cuba. Remember to download maps.me to assist you. You will receive a map of the city during orientation, and will learn how to navigate each transportation system. Note that no matter how you choose to get around in Cuba (in collective taxis, private taxis, metro taxis, bike taxis, or the bus) you will always need to walk, at least part of the way, to your destination.

For private taxis, you may need to walk to central locations to track them down – they are expensive and are not recommended unless it is late at night or necessary. To take collective taxis – *máquinas*, or *almendrones* – which will likely be your primary mode of transportation, you will need to walk to

specific streets to catch them on their routes (such as *23* or *Línea*). Likewise for the bus or *gua gua* –you will need walk to the bus stop and wait in a large crowd representing a line (*cola* – see below) for...a while. *Bici taxis* generally operate in Havana Vieja, and there are also *cooperativa* buses and metro-taxis for half the price of a *máquina*, just \$5MN.

Navigating Havana and its fairly complicated transportation system without the Internet also has an impact on the way in the city is experienced. People on the street are not timid to talk to strangers, even if merely to point out their existence. The city is vibrant, energetic, and beautiful. However, at times it may present challenges, such as attempts at hustling, especially if you're seen as a foreigner, and/or if you're presenting as female. Please see Section (14.6) for more detail.

### **(9.1) Catcalling in Cuba–**

Referred to as *piropos* or “compliments”, catcalling is incredibly common and can be infuriating for a modern-day feminist by U.S. standards. The *piropos* may range from friendly greetings to explicit sexual harassment. Everyone has a different way of reacting to and dealing with them – firm phrases like “*déjame en paz*” or “*No estoy pa’ nada*” are often helpful, as is ignoring them completely. Headphones are often referred to in Cuban slang as “anti-piropos”, however you should not wear headphones at night. If you are piropo'd and followed, do not hesitate to ask for help on the street and/or jump into the nearest local business to shake them off.

### **(9.2) Máquinas–**

Also known as *almendrones*, *carros*, or peso cabs, they are old American cars that have taxi signs. They generally begin and end at *Capitolio* in Havana Vieja and run to the outskirts of the city. You can take a *máquina* from any point on its route (except at a bus stop) to any other point on the route for a rate of 10 *moneda nacional*. If you are traveling a longer distance, such as from ISA (the art school) to the University or Havana Vieja it will likely cost \$20MN. Since Cuban prices are in constant flux, it has become common for a driver charge you \$20MN - \$1CUC per trip, even for short distances. There are a variety of tips and tricks for understanding *máquinas* that we will go over during orientation, such as etiquette and hand signaling.

To catch a *máquina*, stand at the edge of a major street such as *Línea* and flag one down with your arm pointing at a 45-degree angle towards the ground. When the *chofer* stops, you ask him if he will pass your destination “¿vas a pasar por el Capitolio?”. If he responds affirmatively or idles, you can hop in – ¡no tira la puerta! (Be gentle slamming doors...).

**Note:** There are several ways in which *máquina* drivers try to make some extra money. A classic way is by charging foreigners double, even if they are students. Another way is by taking you to the exact address you need to go to, which is often off their fixed route and will be considered a private taxi. They will then probably expect the price of this detour to be paid in CUCs. If you are the only person in the cab and your *chofer* is asking you details regarding your final destination, don't be afraid to remind him that you intended to take a *taxi colectivo*. However, it is common for Cubans and tourists alike to request the cell phone number of drivers that they get along with well to call them for private rides, such as to the beach, which generally costs \$20CUC round trip but can vary (see below).

### **9.2a Metrotaxis/Ruteros/Cooperativos—**

In car, van, or bus form, these yellow vehicles (different from yellow “55” taxis) are collective transportation systems that have recently rolled out in Havana at a fixed rate of \$5 moneda nacional. Routes are similar to máquinas (with some variation) and are both arguably more comfortable and reliable than the regular *gua gua* and the old school máquinas. Since these three types of transportation are relatively new in Havana, they are subject to change (ie. certain starting/stopping points and routes have shifted slightly block to block since arriving to Havana). We will go over the differences between these modes of transportation and their updated routes during orientation.

### **(9.3) Private Taxis—**

You can also take private taxis that accept CUCs instead of MN, which are often gathered around hotels if you can't seem to spot one on the street. Unlike *máquinas*, private taxis charge per trip, not per passenger, and take you directly to your destination. The fare to CEDEM should be about \$5 CUC, to La Habana Vieja about \$7 – if you ask the driver how much it will cost, he will likely profile you as non-Cuban and try his best shot at making more money. However, if you state a reasonable estimate, such as saying “¿Siete pesos hasta Capitolio?”, you will have better luck at a fair deal.

In a pinch, the Cuba Taxi (yellow cabs) phone number is 855-5555. Another option is the *Cocotaxi*, a yellow, coconut-shaped, three-passenger open vehicle mounted on a motorbike. Is a good idea to get a price before you ride.

#### **(9.4) Bus/ Guagua—**

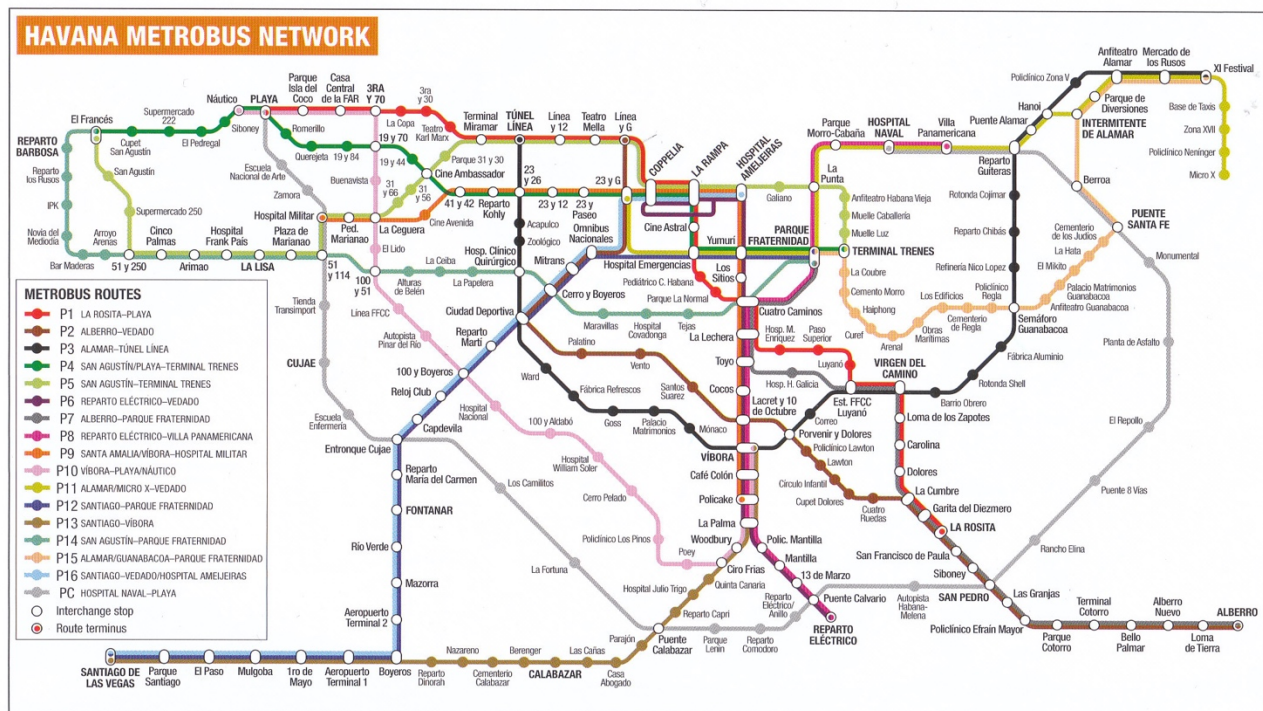
The bus is the cheapest way to get around Havana. Unfortunately, it's also the slowest. Keep alert for pickpocketing and groping, especially at crowded rush hours. Bus fare is 40 centavos of a Cuban peso; many people end up paying one Cuban peso, as bus drivers don't give change. If you are traveling with a friend (recommended), you only need to pay one Cuban peso between the two of you. The buses get extremely full, so you will have to work your way to the back of the bus before your stop if you want to get off in the right place.

- The **P1** goes down Línea, stops at the Habana Libre hotel (near the University), and goes into Centro Habana.
- The **190** stops at the same stop and goes to the University via Línea.
- The **P4**'s first and last stop is at ISA, and it passes near CEDEM on the corner of Avenida 41. This route passes the Habana Libre and into La Habana Vieja. It's easy to catch the P4 home in front of Coppelia on 23. The P4 is good for travel to and from ISA.

#### **(9.5) Colas—**

When you first approach a bus stop (or the crowd in front of a Cadeca, Etecsa, cafeteria, etc), you will likely see a crowd, apparently not forming any sort of line. However, Cuba has a very organized way of making lines. Query as to the *ÚLTIMO* or *ÚLTIMA PERSONA* for the bus you want to catch ("*¿Quién es el último?*"). Your turn is after whoever answers. You are now the *última persona*, and when the next person approaches and calls out *¿ÚLTIMO?*, you raise your hand. That is the only way you can mark your place in line. This applies everywhere.





## (9.6) Getting to the beach (Playas del Este)–

*The beach* in Cuba is about thirty or forty-five minutes away in a car. The *Playas del Este* inhabit a nine kilometer stretch of beaches – Playa el Mégano (the closest), Playa Santa María del Mar (recommended), Mi Cayito (gay beach), Marazul, Playa Boca Ciega, Playa Guanabo (farthest away, but next to a town).

A recent development in national tourism has made going to the beach on big air-conditioned tour buses easy and relatively cheap. These buses run on loops from 9 a.m. until around 7 p.m. The one that goes to and from the Playas del Este leaves from the Hotel Inglaterra at the edge of La Habana Vieja. You pay 5 CUC for a ticket that is good all day on one route. There are three routes that go to different places in and around Havana. Make sure to get there early if you want to get a seat. If you are going with more than one friend, it can be cheaper to take a private taxi to the beach, but there is no guarantee that your *chofer* will agree to a fair price. You can ask any taxi driver if he will take you to the beach.

### **(9.7) Travel out of Havana to the provinces—**

If you plan on traveling on your own, you will be required to submit an independent travel itinerary to the director or director's assistant of the program a minimum of three days prior to departure. The itinerary needs to include all details regarding your trip, including dates of travel, mode of transportation (ex. bus number, time), phone numbers of where you will be staying, and who you will be with. While program staff is happy to help, we are not travel agents; detailed travel and tourist information can be found at all hotels. Please see Sections (14.3 & 14.7) for more detail.

For travel to the provinces, [Viazul buses](#) (for tourist use only) are the best way to go, since they are more reliable and comfortable than the Astro buses (the regular Cuban buses) and cost only slightly more. The Viazul station is located in Nuevo Vedado and requires a taxi ride. The Astro bus station is located on Boyeros in Plaza de la Revolución, within walking distance from the University.

- Bus Station Telephone: 703397, 792456, 709401
- Astro Telephone: 815652, 811108
- Viazul Telephone: 811413

## **10. ACADEMICS**

You will have four classes in Cuba. One of which will be a core-class at CEDEM, and the other three will be electives. You may register for your electives at either the University of Havana, or the Instituto Superior de los Artes (ISA). Depending on the semester, other classes may be offered, such as a class at the Centro de Estudios de la Economía Cubana (CEEC), a class at the Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (FNCL), or a non-lab Biology class on Cuban biodiversity through the Facultad de Biología. All available options will be discussed during Orientation. If you plan on taking a class at ISA, bring your own materials for they are nearly impossible to find in Havana. If you plan on taking the bio class, please bring a sleeping pad for overnight camping trips.

### **(10.1) Grading—**

For each of your four classes you'll receive a grade, on the scale of 5(A) 4(B) 3(C) 2-1(F). For the CEDEM class, you'll receive a written evaluation in addition to a grade. Grades will be based on attendance, class participation, and quality of essays and/or presentations completed. At the end of the semester, the program director will send your grades to the Sarah Lawrence Registrar, who will send them to you if you're a Sarah Lawrence student and to the Registrar of your university if you're not. If you have any questions about the evaluation and grading processes, please bring them up as early in the semester as possible with the program director and with the professors of your classes.

### **(10.2) Credits—**

Upon completion of your full-required program in Havana, you'll receive a full semester's credit through the Sarah Lawrence Registrar. If you are not a Sarah Lawrence student, the Registrar will send your credit, grade, and evaluation information to your institution.

In Cuba there are often not syllabi for individual classes. The Cuban students are enrolled in *carreras* (majors), taking a series of pre-planned classes with their cohort from the day they enter the University. Because paper is scarce, there are rarely printed bibliographies, or printed course descriptions. It will depend on your relationship with your professors to get the necessary information to plan out your assignments. Course readings are usually copied onto flash drives from the professor's computer. One indispensable part of every Cuban student's equipment is a flash drive, a *memoria*. As per previous note, bring several.

In addition, our students are not in Cuba for the entire University of Havana semester, and often make individual arrangements with professors regarding individual projects and presentations, in order to complete coursework before the Cuban final exams, which take place several weeks after our departure. It is your responsibility to inform your professors of your departure date immediately upon entering the class.

### **(10.3) Non-SLC Credit Transfer—**

Add to this the various vicissitudes of registration—unpredictable availabilities of particular classes, professors, classroom spaces etc.—and you have a situation in which it's impossible to provide the

kind of information which many institutions' and majors' processes of 'pre-approval' often require. Here are a few suggestions:

- Please feel free to put your study abroad director and/or major/department advisor in touch with the program director, for as much detailed information as may be available.
- Discuss the possibility of providing your department with your own syllabus and bibliography for each class you take in Cuba, at the semester's end, reflecting your actual work in the class.
- Understand that part of the joy and challenge of this program is to study in contexts and conditions that are not the same as the ones to which you may be accustomed, and that academic rigor and real learning may take many different forms.

#### **(10.4) Participation—**

You're about to be immersed in a culture that's undergone a dramatic, extraordinary process for the past 50+ years: the Cuban Revolution. One University of Havana history professor described part of the impact of the revolution this way: *"El tránsito progresivo de espectador a actor que el proceso en su devenir forja"* - "The gradual transition from spectator to actor that the process forged in its unfolding."

If you're a student in the United States, immersed in YouTube, movies, TV, and the worlds of social media, you are arriving in Cuba with some sophisticated expertise in being a spectator. In your time in Cuba, you'll find yourself constantly challenged to move in the other direction. Academically, this means not watching in silence, but saying something, even if you might find this difficult at first. You'll be living in a culture where silence reads as a mystifying lack of interest, particularly when coming from foreigners. Whether in classrooms or meetings or communal meals or during field-trip presentations: don't expect others to carry the conversational ball for you. At any point, feel free to raise your hand and call out *"profe"*, to ask for clarification, to ask questions, and/or to make comments. Demonstrating interest by asking questions is crucial – otherwise, Cubans will (in general) think that you are uninterested/bored in what they have to say. It is a good idea to bring



small notebooks or notepads to jot down notes and questions, to either bring up during classes or field trips, or during our weekly meetings that we have as a group.

### **(10.5) CEDEM–**

The [Centro de Estudios Demográficos](#) is a research institute branch of the University of Havana that is devoted to studies of the Cuban population and development. It is located in the neighborhood across the *Almendares* river, called *Playa* or *Miramar*, a 15-minute taxi ride from the University. As the home base of the Sarah Lawrence program, you will attend one class per week at CEDEM exclusively with the other Sarah Lawrence students, as well as the director and assistant director. This class is the core of your semester with SLC in Havana.

- **Structure:** each week, a different professor will conduct a two-hour seminar and join the group for lunch nearby after class. In the afternoon, you will attend field trips to various cultural institutions that relate to the topics studied. Units include Cuban population, the interrelation of development and Cuban society; economic and social development; family in Cuban society; gender and race in Cuban society; and environmental studies and local development.
- **Assignments:** your assignments will be given to you on flash drives. You are expected to do all of the readings prior to attending class. Note that rather than spending time racing to copy down notes from the PowerPoint, it is recommended that you ask professors for a copy of their presentation on a flash drive after class. This way, you can focus on writing down questions and taking notes on their responses. They will be thrilled to pass it along!
- **Conference projects:** as per the Sarah Lawrence conference system, you'll be assigned a **tutor** through CEDEM, with whom you'll develop and complete **an independent project** on an aspect of contemporary Cuban society that interests you, culminating in **a 15-20 page paper and presentation in Spanish** by the semester's end. The idea is that you'll spend time every week with your tutor discussing research on a topic of your choice – the more you can relate your topic to your particular interests, the more successful your paper will be, so feel free to get creative! However, it is important to note that your tutor is your academic guide, *not* your professor. Therefore, you should expect to find readings on your own, as well as

make trips to various cultural spaces and institutions on your own as well. Waiting around for your tutor to hand you the necessary information for your project never works out. Past projects have included art and gender in Cuba; urban design and the development of ISA; sustainable agriculture in Cuba; Cuban hip-hop; economic inequality in Cuba, education in Cuba, etc. At the end of the semester you will present your project to your peers, as well as the Director, the Director's Assistant, the CEDEM coordinator, the head of CEDEM, and all tutors.

Aside from your core class at CEDEM, you will choose three other full classes to complete your programs, which may or may not include a Spanish class. During orientation week we will look at schedules and course offerings, and you'll be encouraged to visit as many classes as interest you before you make your final enrollment choices. Final choices **must** be made by the end of the second week of the semester.

### **(10.6) Spanish—**

Our program requires you to arrive in Cuba prepared to complete university level classes given entirely in Spanish. During orientation, the program staff will evaluate your speaking abilities to determine whether or not you will be encouraged to take a Spanish language class while in Cuba as well. Spanish tutors are generally available upon request.

### **(10.7) The University of Havana—**

As a student in the Sarah Lawrence in Cuba program, you'll become a matriculated student at the University of Havana. Due to the system of *carreras* – 'majors' with fixed yearlong programs of study and few electives – you'll be choosing your classes individually from within the curriculum. In the past, our students have taken classes in the Facultades (Departments) of Filosofía y Historia, (including Sociology), Artes y Letras, (Art History and Literature), and Biología. As a University of Havana student, you'll have the opportunity to participate in intramural sports and in the FEU (Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios), the student union, as well as having access to all University libraries.

### **(10.8) ISA—**

The [Instituto Superior de los Artes](#) is the national conservatory. It is often referred to as the Cuban equivalent of Juilliard – for this reason, **it's not possible for our students to begin art studies at ISA, nor to pursue casual interests. Students may only deepen serious art studies that they have already begun.** In the past, our students have enrolled in classes at ISA in Cuban percussion, the Cuban guitar called the *tres*, voice, and piano, as well as in dance (Contemporánea & Folklórica), and Visual Arts classes (Painting, Digital Photography, Printmaking, Drawing, Sculpture, & Ceramics). Performance-centered classes in Theater & Dance tend to be fully enrolled with Cuban students, although there have been exceptions. Visual Arts classes almost always have spaces. Please make sure that if you are planning on taking an art or music class that you bring materials with you to Cuba, such as painting supplies, a camera, notebooks to draw in, paper to print on, etc. In most musical cases you will need to provide your own instrument as well, although in the past students have been able to find and purchase *tres* guitars, for example.

- **Music:** If you would like to study Music at ISA, you'll need to email Professor Biscardi as soon as possible after your acceptance to the program, at [biscardi@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:biscardi@sarahlawrence.edu) (cc directors [psamuel@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:psamuel@sarahlawrence.edu) and [jhorst@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:jhorst@sarahlawrence.edu)), with a detailed list of your previous musical studies at the college level. Professor Biscardi will be in touch with you re further requirements. **If you do not communicate with Professor Biscardi before you arrive in Cuba, it will not be possible for you to study music at ISA.**
- **Visual Art:** Given the level of instruction, as per the previous note, it is generally not possible for our students to *begin* arts studies at ISA. If you plan to register for an arts class at ISA, come prepared with a list of the studies you've already completed in visual art, as well as a digital portfolio of previous work. **If you don't have some sort of artistic background, it will not be possible for you to register for Arts classes at ISA.**

Note that if you are considering studying at ISA for one of your electives, you should bring instruments, cameras, and art supplies for they are difficult to obtain in Cuba. Feel free to talk to the program director about the various options and inquire more detail. We will watch the film [Unfinished Spaces](#) (about the history of ISA) during orientation.

## **(10.9) Libraries–**

While undergoing your class research, you will not be able to take books home from the library. Almost all libraries require on-site reading – paper is scarce. If you have a sense of what you might want to study in Cuba, it's a good idea to download as many related books and articles as you can before you leave in both English and Spanish.

There is a main University library, as well as one in each of the *facultades*, and at CEDEM. Depending on your research interests, you will be able to find other important specialized collections in a variety of locations – don't hesitate to ask your tutor! To access most libraries, you will need to be *acreditad@*, which involves getting a student ID from the University. We will get everyone a library card at the national library during orientation.

- ***Biblioteca Nacional José Martí***: located on *Boyerros* at Plaza de la Revolución. This library has a good selection of materials on all subjects, a gallery, and a screening room. Exhibits and events change regularly. Books cannot be signed out of the library and students need a library card. We will get library cards as a group here during orientation. Hours: 8:30am to 9pm, Monday through Friday, and 8:30am to 6pm on Saturdays.
- ***Biblioteca Nacional Plaza de Armas***: located on the south side of the Plaza de Armas, in La Habana Vieja. Students will find a good selection of books on all subjects. It's been recently renovated, so it's a nice air-conditioned place to study. Books cannot be signed out of the library and students need a library card. Hours: 8:30am to 6pm, Monday through Friday.
- ***Casa de las Américas Library***: located on 3ra and G. This library has a great selection of Latin American literature, novels, poetry, and critical texts, and materials relating to the social sciences. Student ID required. Special arrangements can be made for borrowing books. Hours: 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.
- ***Centro de Estudios Martianos***: located on Calle 4 between Línea and Calzada. Specializes in texts by and about José Martí. Also houses a good selection of Cuban

history and biographical materials. For in-library use; no library card needed. Hours: 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

- ***Cinemateca del ICAIC***: library of the Cuban film institute ICAIC, on Avenida 23 and Calle 12 in Vedado. Extensive collection of film-related materials (re Cuban and foreign films). Hours: 9am to 2pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
- ***Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA)***: good resources on arts-related subjects. Also an audio library for music students, and slow Internet.

## 11. LIVING IN HAVANA

You will live in Havana, the capital of Cuba, in the neighborhood of Vedado. You will be staying in a *casa particular*, which is like the Cuban version of a home stay – you will be living inside a Cuban home alongside its owners and/or their employees who will look after you. As always, when you are on the street, it is important to be aware of your surroundings, and to be respectful of cultural norms, to avoid coming into contact with issues that may affect your safety. The easiest way to do this is to speak Spanish everywhere, to avoid walking on dark streets at night, and to familiarize yourself with the city as soon as possible.

Vedado, for the most part, is on a grid system. You will live on *Línea & E*. If you are lost, don't hesitate to stop someone and say, “*disculpa, estoy perdid@, ¿puedes ayudarme?*” and to explain where you are headed or what you are looking for. In general, Havana operates on a word-of-mouth system, so asking for directions is common for everyone – Cubans alike!

### (11.1) Weather–

Havana is a coastal city, so the weather can at times be a bit spontaneous. In general, Cuba is hot and humid with occasional rain – but be prepared to sweat. However, it varies slightly depending on the time of year. The average temperature range in Havana is from 70 to 90 degrees in the summer, to 60 to 80 degrees in the winter. The rainy season is from May to October, and the dry season is from November to April. Plan your wardrobe wisely to avoid unnecessary discomfort. You will likely

be sweating on your way to class, only to find the AC is turned up so high that you are shivering. *Aguaceros* will come and go frequently, which will also cause blackouts, or *apagones*. It is a good idea to bring a compactable an umbrella – *sunbrellas* are very common in Cuba. Note that many students find it necessary to change their clothes a couple of times per day due the heat, dust, and rain, and washing clothes is a lot more time consuming in Cuba than in the States – again, plan your wardrobe accordingly!

### **(11.2) Your Casa Particular–**

You will be housed in a *casa particular*, part of a Cuban home available for rent, similar to a home stay. You'll be sharing a room with another student in a building centrally located in the Vedado neighborhood, between the central road of Línea and the Malecón, a thirty-minute walk from the University. Bed linens and towels are provided, and you'll be provided with breakfast and dinner. Each room has its own bathroom and in some cases a refrigerator. You'll work out laundry arrangements with your host, but note that in almost all situations your clothing will be hung to dry.

### **(11.3) Casa Rules–**

As per the regulations of the University of Havana for all its students, you are required to be home before midnight Sunday through Thursday nights, and 3am on weekend nights. You are a guest in Cuba, not only of the University, but also of the families generous enough to host you and future Sarah Lawrence students. House rules are designed to reflect the respect SLC students have for this arrangement, and failure to do so may harm this relationship. As per new regulations since the opening of US-Cuban relations, you are required to sleep every night in your *casa*; if you don't do this, for whatever reason, you're subject to being removed from the program. Non-program guests are not permitted to visit your *casa particular*. Any problems should be reported immediately to Zoe or Jesse.

We hope it goes without saying that you're expected to treat the host(s) of your *casa* with courtesy and respect. In addition to abiding by the rules discussed with your host(s) or with program directors, you will be expected to abide by the rules set forth for our students by the

University of Havana, as specified in Academic Regulations for Semester-length Programs at the University of Havana (see also p. 30). The sections pertaining to housing are:

- Students must abide by the established codes of conduct in their residence.
  - o Students must sleep nightly at the residence. On Sunday-Thursday, they must return before midnight (12 a.m.), Friday and Saturday they must return before 3am, unless authorized by the director to return later or spend the night outside of the residence (on an exceptional basis, see Sections (9.6) and (14.3) for more detail).
  - o To respect the comfort and security of our casa hosts and of the other residents of their buildings, students may receive visits at their casas **from other Sarah Lawrence program students only.**
  - o Students must behave with respect and courtesy towards casa hosts, as well as toward residential neighbors.

Other curfews may apply for your first few weeks in Havana – which is very safe as world capitals go, but safer in terms of late-night navigation once you know your way around.

#### **(11.4) Inside your *Casa Particular*.**

Your rooms will be equipped with electrical outlets, but type and number will vary. There are **not** many outlets available, so if you are buying or bringing any equipment with you (laptops, hairdryers, etc.), it's a good idea to bring an adapter (especially one for a two-pronged outlet that lets you use three-pronged plugs). A surge protector is a necessity (expect power failures and fluctuations periodically). Keep in mind that your roommate will also have electronic devices that they will want to use, so please be accommodating, and consider bringing a hub that will let you charge devices at the same time. Inside of the *casas*, closet space varies per room, so it is a good idea to bring a collapsible shelf to hang if you would prefer to not live out of a suitcase for four months.

#### **(11.5) Food—**

Cuban food is very meat and rice heavy, with a significant amount of beans, fried things, fruit, salad, and in some lucky cases, fish. Although newer *paladares* in Cuba are slowly but surely

becoming more accommodating to certain diets, vegetarian diets in Cuba are in general more difficult to maintain than they are in the U.S. We caution students who wish to maintain even stricter diets such as being vegan or kosher, as it will be nearly impossible with the culture, resources, and program setup in Cuba as you will not have many opportunities to shop and cook for yourself. Please be clear about any allergies or dietary restrictions prior to arrival so that the program can plan accordingly and let program staff know immediately if you choose to change your diet upon arrival or during your semester.

As mentioned, you will eat breakfast every morning in your *casa*. Please note that if you do not want breakfast for some reason you will need to alert your *caser@s* the day before. Dinner will be provided every night in the same apartment building, in Tower B on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor at a restaurant called [Porto Habana](#). If you wish to skip dinner, you must advise the restaurant owners by 2pm by calling 7-833-1425. You will be responsible for finding your own lunch every day; we will go over good options during orientation.

Many students also find that Cuban cuisine can be blander than what they're accustomed to. Cuban cuisine offered in the United States is usually loaded with heat, which is nearly impossible to come by in Cuba. You might want to bring hot sauce, black pepper, and/or any favorite seasonings or spices if you're so inclined.

It can also be challenging for students used to having snack food available at all times to adjust to not being able to buy food on every corner in Havana. Especially at the beginning of your time in Cuba, and when we travel (when eating times might be unpredictable), you might want to have a stash of favorite snacks to tide you over between scheduled mealtimes: power bars, peanut butter, nuts, chocolate, granola, dried fruit, etc. Note that in Cuba, wherever you are, if you snack it is customary to offer a bite to everyone that you are with. Remember that you will be living in a mostly-Socialist country where everyone looks after each other, especially when it comes to food, so failing to do so will come off as rude.

Note that you cannot drink the tap water in Cuba, unless you boil it, or have a specific *Seychelle* water bottle – not just any filtered bottle will do. To avoid dehydration and resulting exhaustion, you should



purchase [the specific Seychelle water bottle](#) to carry with you during the day in case you run out of bottled water. Note that the program will subsidize your bottled water consumption weekly.

### **(11.6) Home vs. Street–**

There are a variety of “dress codes” in Cuba. What people wear at home is extremely different from what people wear out on the street, at night, or at work/school. In general, clothing at home is casual – shorts, tank tops, and flip-flops are all appropriate inside the *casas*. However, when you go on the street – and especially when you are going to class – please avoid dressing too casual, and please practice proper hygiene. As silly as it sounds to us, flip-flops and pool slides are understood as being too casual to wear in public, unless you are running errands in your neighborhood. You will be expected to wear nicer clothing to class, field trips, group outings and any talks or visits with professors. Men should bring long pants that aren’t jeans, and women should bring either skirts and dresses, or dressy shorts, capris and/or pants. Women in the past have wished they brought a few pairs of spandex shorts to wear under skirts and dresses – between crawling in and out of máquinas, walking up and down public stairs, unexpected gusts of wind, and the somewhat unforgiving *piropos*, it’s best to be fully covered. Dress codes are self-monitored, so please be respectful with your attire.

When you go out at night, you are free to wear whatever you want, although students in the past have wished they brought more “going-out clothing” – Cubans don’t mess around when it comes to night life. There are some spaces in which men are expected to wear pants and button-down shirts, even when it is scorching hot out. Although it is tough to pack your life for the next four months into just a few suitcases, you will likely regret going light in the clothes department. In almost all cases, students have mentioned that they wish they had brought more clothing in general and worried less about weight requirements. You will also likely need several pairs of shoes, for they will take a beating on the streets of Havana. Note that your clothing will hang to dry outside on a line, so avoid bringing anything that you are extremely attached to.

## **12. HEALTH & MEDICINE**

While in Cuba, the program will provide health insurance. Your insurance will cover hospitalization, tests, emergencies and most routine visits. Dentistry is not covered, nor are elective procedures,

abortions, or tests for STDs. If you still have your wisdom teeth, please try to avoid emergency surgeries while you are in Havana! Please bring your own condoms to Cuba, since the ones available will be of low quality. A separate policy is purchased for each student to cover emergency care outside of Cuba in the extremely unlikely event of medical evacuation. This inexpensive emergency coverage is billed to the student's account. **Please note, however, that students still need to have their own US medical insurance through the Sarah Lawrence plan or through their parents. This is to ensure they have adequate health insurance before they leave the US and upon their return.** You will receive information on the Sarah Lawrence plan from our Comptroller's Office. Included will be a waiver form if you have your own insurance. This can also be found at <http://www.slc.edu/offices-services/student-accounts/health-insurance/index.html>

Mental health in Cuba is in many ways not recognized, making it difficult for students with severe or vulnerable mental illness to seek medical attention while in Cuba. The director and assistant director are on the ground to provide support for students in many ways, however, **they are not mental health specialists and should not be expected to manage students' emotional issues.** It is important that students who face issues such as anxiety, depression, OCD, ADHD, etc., have a treatment plan with their U.S. doctor that they can access while abroad. This should not only include 4 months of medication (see below), but also a communication plan to deal with new environments that can be overwhelming or stressful.

### **(12.1) Medicine—**

If you take prescription medication you should bring what you will need for the entire semester. In the past, students have had a lot of trouble filling prescriptions in Cuba, especially when it comes to controlled drugs such as ADHD medication. Please plan accordingly. If this is not possible, have your doctor write a prescription indicating the ***chemical name*** of your medication, and check with pharmacies well in advance as they can take up to two weeks to fill. It's also a good idea to bring any over the counter drugs that you are used to using, such as ibuprofen, or that you could potentially need, such as Pepto Bismol, as they will be difficult to encounter in Cuba. Things like condoms, feminine hygiene products, and yeast infection remedies will also be difficult to find and/or of low quality, so plan on bringing more than you think you will need.

The [Cira García](#) clinic and pharmacy is located on Avenida 41 and 20 in Miramar, across the street from CEDEM. The clinic and pharmacy cater to tourists and foreign residents, providing a good selection of medications and excellent service. We recommend this facility for any medical and/or prescription needs. There is also a very good pharmacy across the street from the clinic.

### **(12.2) Gyms—**

If you are interested in joining a gym, memberships are available at various places:

- **Sephardic Temple**, 17<sup>th</sup> and E, Vedado- A good gym that offers aerobic classes. No pool. Costs approximately \$4-15 a month, depending on what kind of access you would like to the facility.
- **OdaCycling**: located on Calle F e/23 y 25, Vedado. \$2 per class.
- **Museo de Artes Decorativas** (17<sup>th</sup> and D, Vedado) has offered yoga classes, 50 pesos for 8 weeks.

## **13. ACTIVITIES & NIGHT LIFE**

Havana is a vibrant city with many opportunities for fun via arts events, cultural festivals, movies, clubs, beaches, and more. Definitely bring a tourist guidebook with you, for when your schoolwork is done. During the semester we will keep you posted on what's happening, and you will be hearing about events and places through friends—the scene is always changing, and many events are spontaneous or announced with very short notice. As mentioned, you have a curfew on weeknights of 12am. Note that at all times you will be representing the United States, the University, Sarah Lawrence, the hosts (*caser@s*) of your casas, as well as your director, Jesse, and his assistant, Zoe. If you choose to go out, you are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Keep in mind that, as hard as it is to believe, binge drinking isn't commonly practiced in Cuba, and will both harm your safety and reflect poorly on everyone that you are representing (see Section 14.1, 14.2, and

14.9 for more information). Below, you can find many spaces that you are free to check out during your free time.

### **(13.1) Cultural Spaces—**

- **UNEAC:** Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas Cubanos. Located on the corner of Avenida 17 and Calle H. UNEAC hosts cultural events of various kinds, contains a bookstore and a screening room and offers classes (film, writing, etc.) On Wednesday afternoons there is a regular Rumba show. Saturday is Noche de Boleros.
- **Casa del ALBA Cultural:** on Linea at the corner of D. Many cultural programs and performances and a terrific bookstore (in Cuban pesos).
- **Casa de las Américas:** Located on 3ra and Ave. de los Presidentes. It contains a gallery, bookstore, hosts art exhibits, round table discussions and guest lecturers.
- **Casa de la Cultura:** Located in every neighborhood, you will find a regular fare of music, dance and parties. On occasion they offer courses (music, percussion and dance). The centers in the Vedado and La Habana Vieja areas are particularly active. La Habana Vieja has an outdoor art and poetry space and holds readings, music concerts and art exhibits on a regular basis.
- **Centro Cultural Juan Marinello:** located on Boyeros (between the University and the main bus terminal). This center hosts book openings, lectures, round table discussions, and often has guest speakers from Cuba and abroad. The Center also offers classes (often in the social sciences) for a nominal fee.

### **(13.2) Theatres—**

- **Gran Teatro Alicia Alonso de La Habana:** Located on the Prado in Centro Habana, in front of Parque Central, by the Capitolio. This theatre houses the Cuban Ballet and also hosts many theatre events. You will find the events posted outside the theater or

in the *Cartelera de La Habana*. Tickets for events go on sale the Tuesday before opening night.

- **Amadeo Roldán:** Located on Calzada and Calle D, in Vedado. The national orchestra plays here regularly. It is also where most of the special music festivals will be held.
- **Teatro Nacional:** located on Paseo de la Revolución in Plaza de la Revolución. Larger music events (festivals, guest orchestras etc.) take place in this theater.
- **Teatro Mella:** located near the residence on Linea and several other smaller theaters that participate in theater, dance, and film festivals. Events are always posted on the front of the theater.

**NOTE:** Be aware that prices are posted in CUC as well as in Cuban pesos for most large-scale ballet, music and theatre shows. As a temporary resident you are entitled to Cuban peso prices. However, you will have to buy tickets in advance. BRING YOUR STUDENT CARNÉ!

### **(13.3) Clubs, Music Venues—**

There are a variety of clubs and music venues all over the city. Ask around. The locations vary but you can find everything from salsa to techno, hip-hop to trova and R&B, jungle, son and boleros. Many clubs have a matinee in the afternoon, where the cover charge is much lower or even free. Most of the clubs/discos are in the Vedado area not far from the University.

- **Fábrica de Arte Cubano:** This new club/art gallery/movie theater/bar/performance space is a cultural phenomenon in Cuba, don't leave Havana without checking it out! Cover is 2 CUC, located on 26 e/ 11 y 13.
- **Fresa y Chocolate:** located on 23 e/ 10 y 12, it is the cultural center of ICAIC, the Cuban film institute, including movie screenings, literary & scientific conferences, and many other cultural events.

- **Teatro Bertolt Brecht:** located on Línea e/ I y J, Brecht has a theater upstairs and a nightclub downstairs. It is very popular with foreign students, so keep a sharp watch re pickpocketing & hassling by *jinetes*.
- **Cine Miramar:** located in *Playa* on 5a & 94, this movie theater/concert venue often has jazz, fusion, electronica bands, etc.
- **La Zorra y el Cuervo:** Located at 23 and O in Vedado, this jazz club with always has good music. Cover charge is \$10 CUC, which includes at least two drinks. Main sets for this and the Jazz Club start about midnight.
- **El Jazz Café:** located at Galeria del Paseo, opposite the Meliá Cohiba, same deal as Zorra y Cuervo. The atmosphere is a little heavy on hustlers and cigarette smoke, but the music is wonderful.
- **La Casa de la Música:** located in Miramar across the park from CEDEM, hosts live bands covering a broad range of genres for modest prices. It also has a good record store for Cuban music and an outdoor restaurant/bar.
- **Casa de la Trova:** Free, traditional trova.
- **Café Cantante:** Located in Teatro Nacional through a rear entrance, it is the main venue for Cuban hip-hop with matinees in Cuban pesos (bring your carnet) every other Saturday afternoon.
- Outdoor concerts are held regularly. Locations and performers will be announced in the weekly *Cartelera de La Habana*.

### **(13.4) Music and Dance Classes—**

Traditionally, the program has offered weekly Salsa classes for students. If you are interested in taking other music or dance classes (not for credit), you have some options:

- **Teatro Nacional** and the **Casa de la Cultura** offer very affordable dance and music classes. However, the schedule of courses varies. Call ahead or visit for precise information.
- Private dance and music classes are available. You can contact the ISA or the ENA for professors or students at the school who offer private classes. It is a good idea to go in person and ask around, look at their bulletin boards, and talk with students.

## **14. PROGRAM POLICIES**

The Sarah Lawrence program in Cuba has an excellent safety record. We believe this is primarily the result of students and staff acting responsibly towards themselves, each other, and the Cuban community. To ensure the continued wellbeing of students and staff and of the program itself, we require that students adhere to the following policies for the duration of their stay in Cuba. Please read this and make sure you are clear about the parameters. **Failure to comply with these policies and guidelines is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and departure from Cuba with no credit.**

### **(14.1) Drugs and Prostitution—**

Drugs—the same substances assigned illegal status in the United States—are illegal in Cuba (including marijuana & CBD). Their consumption, purchase and sale are severely punished under the Cuban penal code, which applies to foreign nationals. The Sarah Lawrence program has a no-tolerance policy with respect to the consumption, buying or selling of illegal substances on the part of students or staff anywhere in Cuba. The buying or selling of sex is also illegal in Cuba. Breaking the laws of your host country, in addition to putting you at risk of arrest, is grounds for the termination of your participation in the program and return to the United States.

### **(14.2) Alcohol—**

The legal drinking age in Cuba is 18. The Sarah Lawrence program permits drinking in moderation. By “moderation”, it is understood that your drinking should not compromise your safety or that of the

group. Furthermore, it should not affect your active participation in your academic classes or any group activities at the scheduled times. Do not drink to the point that you can't take care of yourself and/or your fellow students in unfamiliar surroundings. Do not drink to the point of being sick. Your admission to the program assumes that you have the maturity to drink in Cuba without endangering yourself or anyone else, without causing any difficulties for your host(s) or neighbors, and without compromising your schoolwork. See that your choices reflect this. If they don't, disciplinary actions will be taken, up to and including termination of participation in the program and return to the United States.

### **(14.3) Travel outside of Cuba—**

Given the extremely complicated situation with visas and air travel to and from Cuba, except in cases of medical or family emergency, students are not allowed to travel outside of Cuba for the duration of the program.

### **(14.4) Guests and Visitors—**

**Guests and Visitors – Please inform your family and friends that if they are United States citizens or residents, they cannot legally enter Cuba as a tourist. Travelling to Cuba to visit a Sarah Lawrence student may be illegal under US Law. Sarah Lawrence is not responsible for the travel decisions of friends and family of program students.** Only students on the program are legally covered under Sarah Lawrence College's general academic license. Our license **does not** extend to friends and family.

Additionally, students' guests are not permitted to reside with students in Sarah Lawrence College housing. A family visit does not excuse you from attending classes or program events.

### **(14.5) Theft—**

Although Havana is one of the safest world capitals, there is always a risk of theft, as in any other city. Students should carry photocopies of their passports with them everywhere. It is extremely complicated and expensive to replace a U.S. passport in Havana. Observing this rule and carrying around only a small amount of cash means that a pickpocketing experience, while disagreeable, will not seriously disrupt your life in Cuba. Adhering to our program tradition of speaking Spanish on the street may help avoid theft as well.



#### **(14.6) Transportation—**

Students are not allowed to rent cars while in Cuba. We also want to make you aware that when taking public transportation, as well as when walking anywhere, you must remain alert and vigilant, as incidents of theft and inappropriate physical contact are not uncommon. You need to be aware that it is extremely difficult to find transportation at night. If you are going outside walking distance at night, you should plan in advance how you are going to return to your casa by making your own arrangements with a taxi service. Do not count on being able to hail or call for a taxi late at night, as few taxis move on the streets after hours. Plan ahead.

#### **(14.7) Independent Travel—**

Independent travel outside the Havana area may be permitted once students have had some experience traveling in Cuba, and as long as the student's travel plans do not conflict with academic obligations or required group activities. Students in past years have had some wonderful experiences on well-planned travel outside the trips organized by the program. Permission from the director must be granted, and dangerous or long itineraries may be denied. Students should seek permission at least 3 days in advance of proposed departure. Students must provide in writing their dates, mode and timings of travel, the address and phone numbers of lodging, and the names of people accompanying them. The program strongly urges that you travel in groups of at least two people.

#### **(14.8) Swimming—**

Students should not swim in remote areas or areas designated as hazardous, including off the Malecón. The program strongly urges that students go to swimming areas in groups of at least two people. If you would like to go swimming, the beach is available to you! See section (9.5) for more detail.

#### **(14.9) Moving around at night—**

After dark students should move around only in known areas, avoiding remote places or unfamiliar neighborhoods. The program strongly urges you to move in groups of at least two people when you are out past dark, and to speak Spanish. Even when moving in groups, you

should always exercise caution and remain aware of your surroundings at all times. This is actually a responsible and safe practice to observe at any time of day or night.

#### **(14.10) Natural disaster procedures—**

The Sarah Lawrence program's fall semester takes place during the hurricane season in Cuba. Such storms are a common occurrence, and Cuba is highly organized to effectively protect the safety of citizens and foreign nationals alike. In the event a hurricane is imminent, Cuban authorities will publicize a series of procedures to be followed. It is of utmost importance that all program students and staff comply with these procedures. Failure to do so can result in serious risk to one's health and well-being, as well as create obstacles for Cuban authorities trying to ensure safety for everyone in affected areas.

### **15. OTHER RESOURCES**

In addition to your required preparation, there are a variety of other ways in which you can begin to prepare for your trip. Below we have compiled a variety of resources for you to explore that may begin to set the scene, so to speak, or help you with your Spanish.

#### **(15.1) Movies—**

There are many documentary films that can give you a picture of different aspects of Cuban life and culture. A few recommended ones are:

- "Revolution: Five Visions" (stories of five Cuban photographers)
- "Tuning with the Enemy" (about piano donations to Cuba, with scenes of ISA)
- "Unfinished Spaces" about ISA
- "The Grass is Greener" (about Cuban baseball)
- "The Lost Son of Havana" (Cuban baseball)
- "Canción del Barrio" (Trova music and urban marginality)
- "Montaña de Luz" (Cuban doctors in Central America and Africa)
- "Gay Cuba"
- "Comandante" by Oliver Stone (or "Fidel" by Estela Bravo, or Steven Soderbergh's "Che")
- "Balseros" (follows group of rafters as they leave Cuba and then in US)

- “East of Havana” (hip hop Cubano)
- "Inventos" (hip hop Cubano)
- “Cuba and the Cameraman” (On American Jon Alpert’s travels to Cuba for 45 years)

There are also many wonderful feature films made in Cuba, sometimes available in the U.S. Watching Cuban movies is a great way to practice your understanding of the Cuban accent, which can be frustratingly difficult to understand. Bring with you as many as you can on your hard drive, although it won’t be impossible to find them in Cuba, and many of them will be included in the *Cine* class elective.

- Suite Habana
- Memorias del Subdesarrollo
- Fresa y Chocolate
- Un Hombre de Éxito
- Lucia
- Retrato de Teresa
- Muerte de un Burócrata
- La Última Cena
- Guantanamera
- El Benny
- Nada
- Miel Para Oshun
- La Película de Ana
- Vampiros en La Habana
- Juan de los Muertos
- Habanastation
- Soy Cuba
- Viva
- Vestido de Novia

### **(15.2) Reading—**

Depending on your particular interests and background, you may find some of the following books useful.

### [General Histories]

- Aviva Chomsky et al, *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Duke UP, 2003).
- Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform & Revolution* (Oxford UP).
- Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (Oxford UP).
- Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba* (UNC, 2001).
- Ned Sublette, *Cuba and its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago Review Press, 2004).
- Jose Quiroga, *Cuban Palimpsests* (MN UP, 2005).
- Carrie Hamilton, *Sexual Revolutions in Cuba: Passion, Politics, and Memory* (UNC 2014).
- Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (Yale UP, 2004).
- Mick Winter, *Cuba for the Misinformed* (Westsong Publishing, 2013).

### [Other Recommendations]

- *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*, Fidel Castro
- *Socialism & Man*, Che Guevara
- *The Awakening of Latin America*, an anthology of Che's writings compiled by Ocean Books
- Ada Ferrer. *Insurgent Cuba: Race Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1999.
- Louis A. Perez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture*.
- *One Day In December: Celia Sánchez and the Cuban Revolution*, Nancy Stout, Foreword by Alice Walker
- "Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar," Fernando Ortíz
- *Havana, Autobiography of a City*, Alfredo José Estrada
- *Old Havana: Spirit of the Living City* (Mostly photographs, foreword by Eusebio Leal
- *Havana Is A Really Big City* and other short stories, Mirta Yáñez

### [Recommendations on the Caribbean]

- "Report from the Bahamas," June Jordan
- *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid
- *Sweetness and Power*, Stanley Mintz
- *The Black Jacobins*, CLR James
- *Podemos cambiar el mundo*, Camila Vallejo

### **[Student Recommendations]**

- Jacqueline Loss and Esther Whitfield, *New Short Fiction from Cuba* (Northwestern University Press, 2008).
- Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui and Moises Sio Wong, *Our History is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* (NY, Pathfinder, 2006). Also in Spanish.
- Fernando Funes et al, *Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: Transforming Food Production in Cuba* (Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2002).
- Christina García, *Dreaming in Cuba* and *Monkey Hunting*. Novels, available in English or Spanish.
- Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (UNC Press, 2002). A fascinating history of Cuban foreign policy toward Africa.
- Wendy Guerra, *Todos Se Van* and *Nunca Fui Primera Dama*.
- Ernesto Che Guevara, *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58* (Pathfinder, 1996).
- Guevara's classic war diary. Also available in Spanish: *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria*.
- Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs, *Afro-Cuban Voices: On Race and Identity in Contemporary Cuba* (Miami, 2000).

### **(15.3) Internet Resources—**

Your Internet time will be limited and expensive in Cuba, so you might want to take a look at these sites before you go.

- **OnCuba magazine** – cultural magazine written in both English and Spanish  
[www.uncubamagazine.com](http://www.uncubamagazine.com)
- **La Habana magazine** – cultural magazine written in English  
[www.lahabana.com](http://www.lahabana.com)
- **Vistar magazine** – cultural magazine in Spanish  
[www.vistarmagazine.com](http://www.vistarmagazine.com)
- **LANIC-University of Texas**  
[www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/)
- **Granma** – daily newspaper in Cuba  
[www.granma.cu](http://www.granma.cu)
- **Juventud Rebelde** – daily newspaper in Cuba  
[www.juventudrebelde.cu](http://www.juventudrebelde.cu)
- **Spanish-language site on the case of the Cuban 5**  
<http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/miami5/index.html>
- **Revista de Cultura Cubana**  
<http://www.lajiribilla.cu/>
- **Tourist information**  
[www.lonelyplanet.com/dest/car/cub.htm](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/dest/car/cub.htm)
- **U.S. State Department site about U.S. relations with Cuba**  
[www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/)
- **Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano**  
<http://www.cinelatinoamericano.org/>

- **Center for Cuban Studies**  
[www.cubaupdate.org/index.htm](http://www.cubaupdate.org/index.htm)
- **Universidad de La Habana**  
[www.uh.cu](http://www.uh.cu)
- **The Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba (UNEAC)**  
<http://www.uneac.org.cu/>
- ***El Caiman Barbudo***  
<http://www.caimanbarbudo.cu/>
- ***La Ventana*, Casa de las Américas' cultural publication** <http://laventana.casa.cult.cu/>
- ***La Habana Elegante***  
[www.habanaelegante.com](http://www.habanaelegante.com)
- **Central de Trabajadores Cubanos**  
[www.trabajadores.cu](http://www.trabajadores.cu)

## **16. CONTACT**

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*Los viajes son los viajeros. Lo que vemos no es lo que vemos, sino lo que somos.*

*Fernando Pessoa*



## **17. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

### **Academic Regulations for Semester-length Programs at the University of Havana**

International education at the University level provides a channel for an academic exchange of knowledge and culture. At the University of Havana, this educational model has been developed over many years, and in the year 2000, the University created the first semester-long programs for students from the United States. The latter have served as a means of educational, scientific, and cultural exchange between the University of Havana and various U.S. universities. In order to obtain a higher level of organization and discipline in these programs, the University of Havana proposes a set of academic regulations to guarantee their success.

- Sarah Lawrence College, in conjunction with the University of Havana, will determine the nature of the program offered to students. Students are required to take 4 courses, equal to 15 or 16 credits.
- Once enrolled in a subject, the student must fulfill all course requirements with respect to attendance and the system of evaluation in said course, which will determine receipt of a final grade.

- Attendance is mandatory. Students may not miss more than 20% of any class and only for reasons that are excused (e.g. sickness). Students must pass all evaluations in order to receive a final grade and the corresponding credits. No subject may be completed in the United States. If a student does not pass the course due to poor attendance or evaluation, he/she/they will not be awarded credit.
- Students pursuing electives that require some level of theoretical background will receive additional readings beforehand to afford the student a solid understanding of the course content.
- The length of these programs will be one semester, at the end of which students will return to the United States.
- Students will reside in previously determined residences approved by the University of Havana and Sarah Lawrence College. Students may not reside in any lodging that is not approved by the Sarah Lawrence College.
- Students must abide by the established codes of conduct in their residence.
  - o Students must sleep daily at the residence. On Sunday-Thursday, they must return before midnight (12 a.m.) unless they are authorized by the director to return later or spend the night outside of the Residence (on an exceptional basis).
  - o Visits may be received in areas designated by each Residence; no visits are allowed in rooms.
  - o Students must behave with respect and courtesy towards employees of the Residences, as well as residential neighbors.
- Students who do not regularly attend class, who are not systematically seen in areas of the University where they are supposed to receive their academic training, or who spend more than 24 hours away from their Residence, without the due authorization of their Residential Director, will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of their studies within the program and return to the United States.

These regulations will be reviewed with students before beginning their studies at the University of Havana. The Resident Director, representing Sarah Lawrence College, the Program Coordinator, representing the University of Havana, and the Director of Semester-length Study Programs at the University of Havana and the Vice-rector of International Relations and Graduate Studies, are responsible for ensuring that these regulations are fulfilled.

**I have read and understand these regulations. I agree to conform to these regulations set forth by the University of Havana and Sarah Lawrence College:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_