

# alexiscarlin

Barcelona, Spain



In the Les Corts station, Alexis Carlin waits for the metro to take her to class, which was part of her daily routine while in Barcelona. During her 40-minute commute, Carlin was exposed to music from all over the world as musicians played frequently in the metro cars.

**ALEXIS' MAJOR(S):** English

**YEAR/TERM ABROAD:** spring 2003

**REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM:** I didn't have much Spanish before I went, but I didn't want to go somewhere where I would be speaking English, so Barcelona seemed to fit. I also wanted to go somewhere in Europe as well.

**FAVORITE CLASSES:** Women in Mediterranean Literature, Topics in Migration

**DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION:** I lived with three other international students in an apartment with a senora.

**GREATEST CHALLENGE:** Living with the host family and making sure you communicate at the level you want to and also trying to be a part of the community but knowing you'll always be the outsider.

**WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE I LEFT:** I wish I watched "Una Casa de Locos" (L'auberge Espagnole), which is a movie about a French student who studies in Barcelona (it's available on DVD now). It really is accurate as far as studying abroad.

**EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK:** I'm not from a big city, and I wasn't expecting Barcelona to be so big. You really have to be aware of your surroundings, especially because you're not in your native environment.

**GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS, DISCUSS:** You have to go abroad while you're still young. The life is so much better there: more variety, more things to do, it's healthier. You don't end up watching movies and drinking beer all the time; you actually do things.

**WHAT YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE GOING ABROAD:** I'm much more interested in international things. I volunteer at the International Center. I find that it's easier to talk to strangers. I feel that I understand people better and that I'm more politically aware.

"I was surprised by how much it affected me afterwards—how much I miss it, how much I think about it, how much I dream about it and *how much it put me in common with the rest of the world.*"

**ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS:** Get a guidebook for the city and the country, like *Let's Go* and *Lonely Planet*. Travel around but not necessarily to the big cities. Take lots of pictures and keep a journal.