



Calvin Ho. Swarthmore Program in Buenos Aires, 2^o semester 2009.

Swarthmore in Buenos Aires was a stimulating experience, both intellectually and socially. My program of study focused on immigration, a topic that I am very passionate about, so I was very rarely bored. My assignments led me to explore the city on my own and meet interesting people. For example, for my anthropology and linguistics classes, I spent a lot of my time outside of class in the small Chinatown in Belgrano, where I observed first-grade classes at a weekend Mandarin school. I talked to the teachers, made friends with the class clown, and learned that Chinese-Argentine kids are just as rowdy as Chinese-Americans. I became good friends with one of the teachers at the school; we still keep in touch and see each other from time to time when we're in the same country.

When I wasn't in class or wandering around the streets of Chinatown, I was out taking advantage of the amazing cultural opportunities that Buenos Aires had to offer. I love film, so I was a regular at the Sala Leopoldo Lugones in the Teatro Nacional San Martín (just a few blocks from the Swarthmore office), where they show older art house films for very low prices. I also went to the Alianza Francesa to watch films there and mingle with the very large Buenos Aires francophile community.

I lived in an apartment with two other Swatties, which turned out to be a great idea. We spoke Spanish with each other most of the time, and since we became great friends, there was plenty to talk about. Having a kitchen meant that we got to experiment with making Argentine food. One day, my roommate

decided to make empanadas, but we had no idea how to light the gas oven. She enlisted a neighbor to help us; the neighbor ended up staying for our little empanada party and we all had a great time. A few months later, the same neighbor invited us and all of the other Swatties to an asado on the roof of our apartment building. We met his friends for a long night of chatting over lots of steak and wine. We all had our disagreements about history and politics, but that just made the discussion that much more interesting. It's not every day that you get an invite to a rooftop asado; it's too bad that we never got around to doing it again.