

Hampshire in Havana Independent Study Project

An integral component of the academic semester in Havana is a twelve-week independent study project, equivalent to the work in two courses at Hampshire College. Students initially propose their projects during the application process. During this process, students work with Havana program faculty at Hampshire to develop a final proposal. After students are selected, Hampshire sends their final proposals to our partners at the Fundación Alejo Carpentier in Havana, who match each student with an appropriate Cuban professional (known as a “tutor”). When students arrive in Havana, their tutors help them further refine their projects and work out a plan of study. During the semester, tutors meet with students for a minimum of six hours a week and supervise the execution of their projects. Tutors provide various kinds of support to students, depending on the type of project. For example, tutors may suggest readings and film viewings; set up interviews with informants and experts; arrange attendance at relevant conferences and performances; set up site visits; and help locate materials. Tutors also provide feedback and critique on students’ ongoing work. Students submit their final work to their tutors for evaluation, and they present their projects publicly in Havana and to the Hampshire community upon their return.

Students’ projects have a range of approaches and topics. Here are a few:

- Ethnographic fieldwork (with sociological, anthropological, and cultural studies approaches)
- Race, gender, and sexuality studies
- Historical research and archival projects
- Studies of literature, architecture, dance, theater, music, photography, film, and visual arts.
- Performance and practice in arts and literature

Abstracts/samples of past student projects are available both in GEO and on the web at:

<http://www.hampshire.edu/geo/cuba.htm>