

UAB Summer School Return Report

Urban Performing Arts | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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1. Academic Experience at UAB

I participated in the second period of the 2026 UAB Barcelona Summer School and took Urban Performing Arts, a six-ECTS course taught in English by Jaume Bernadet Munné and Rita Kuan of the Comediants Theatre Group. The course was different from a typical lecture-based university class because its main goal was to create and present a live outdoor performance. Two instructors led the class together, combining their experience in theatre, directing, visual design, and large-scale public events.

Each class included both theory and practice. During the lecture sessions, we learned how streets, squares, buildings, costumes, music, large puppets, and audience participation can turn an ordinary urban space into a performance space. Videos, photographs, storyboards, and pop-up materials made the lectures easy to understand. These classes helped me see that urban performing arts are not simply performances placed outside they can change how people use a city and create a temporary sense of community among strangers.



Lecture sessions on street theatre, costume, visual storytelling, and large-scale performance

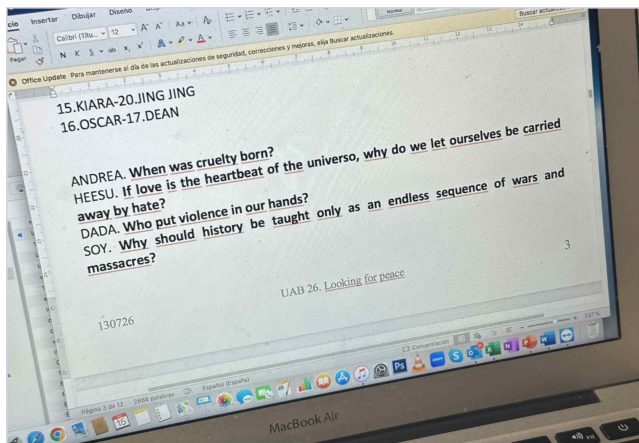
As part of the theoretical work, I wrote a short report and prepared a PowerPoint presentation about the Ansan Street Arts Festival in Korea. I focused on how an ordinary street can become a theatre through music, costume, movement, and public participation. Organizing the material in English was challenging, but presenting a Korean example to classmates from different countries was meaningful. I was able to compare Korean and Catalan approaches to public performance and understand that traditions from different cultures can share similar ideas, such as collective participation, symbolism, and the transformation of everyday places.

2. Creating the Final Performance

The practical goal of the course was to create and perform Looking for Peace together.

Most of the course was practice-oriented. We trained our bodies and voices, learned movements, rehearsed our positions, and gradually connected separate scenes into one performance. Because the work depended on timing and coordination, attendance and active participation were essential. Instead of receiving every answer from the instructors, we had to observe one another, respond to changes, and solve problems as a group.

The final work, Looking for Peace, explored peace, conflict, war, discrimination, human rights, and solidarity. The script included questions such as why violence begins and why history is repeatedly taught through wars and massacres. We communicated these ideas through movement, voice, costume, and simple objects rather than depending only on spoken dialogue. This process showed me that physical expression can cross language barriers and deliver a message even when performers and audiences come from different cultural backgrounds.



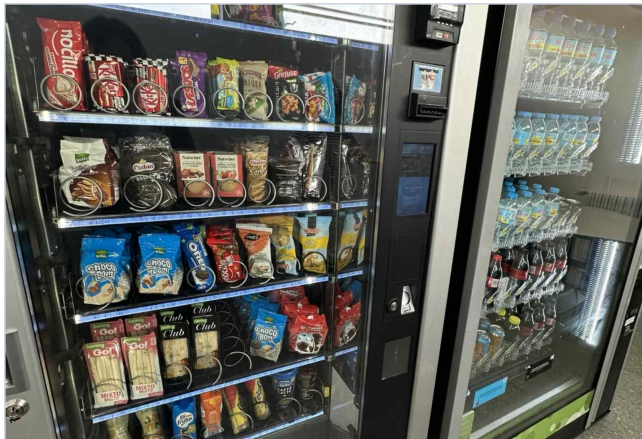
The rehearsal script for Looking for Peace and the final outdoor performance

Preparing a performance for an audience was more demanding than an ordinary group assignment. Every student's movement affected the whole scene, so we repeated the same sections many times and adjusted our timing together. On the final day, we wore white costumes and presented the performance outdoors in front of Summer School students and staff. I felt nervous before it began, but finishing the performance without giving up gave me a strong sense of achievement.

This practical structure also made it easier to become close to classmates than in a normal lecture course. We communicated constantly during rehearsals, helped one another remember cues, and shared both mistakes and improvements. The process taught me that teamwork does not always require perfect language skills. Patience, observation, and a willingness to participate were often more important.

3. Campus Life and International Friendships

The UAB Bellaterra campus gave me the feeling of living in a small university town. Classrooms, green outdoor areas, student facilities, and residence buildings were located within the same campus, so it was easy to move between study and daily life. Even small details, such as the vending machines in the school building, became part of my routine. They were convenient during breaks, especially because the morning classes continued until lunchtime.



Daily campus life: school vending machines and watching football with friends from UAB

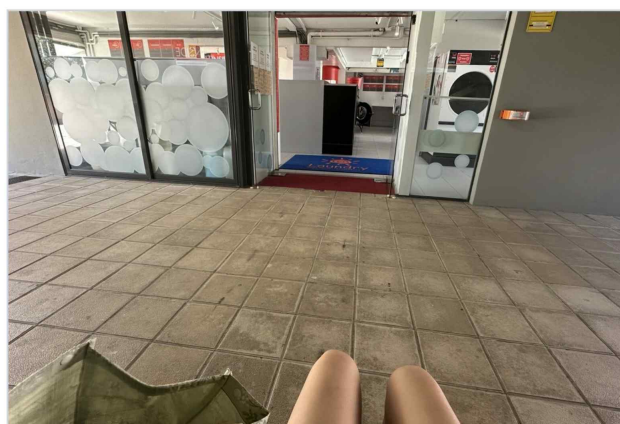
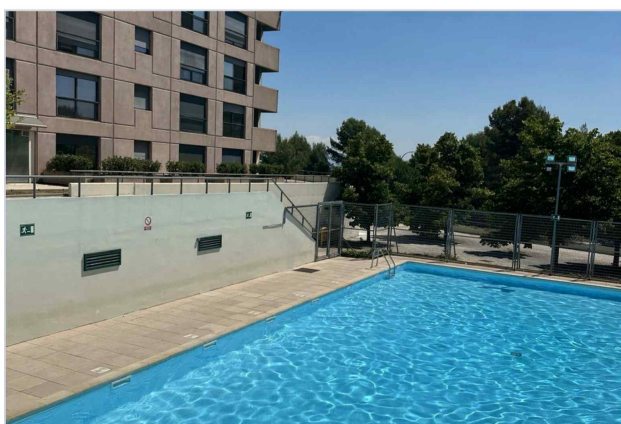
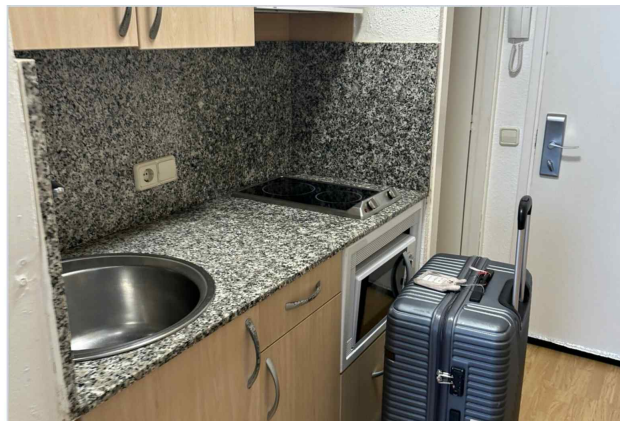
The most memorable part of campus life was meeting students from many countries. Since the course involved continuous rehearsal and group work, conversations began naturally even when we were not confident in English. We spent time together after class, shared food, discussed cultural differences, and watched football together. One night, we gathered at the beach to watch a match, and the relaxed atmosphere made it feel as if we had known one another for much longer than a few weeks.

These friendships changed the way I understood an international program. Before arriving, I mainly thought of studying abroad as taking a class in another country. In reality, the informal moments between classes were equally important. Listening to classmates talk about their homes, schools, and everyday lives helped me recognize both cultural differences and many common concerns among students.

Using English every day was sometimes difficult, but the environment encouraged me to speak without worrying too much about mistakes. I became more comfortable asking questions, explaining my ideas, and joining group conversations. The experience increased my confidence and made me more willing to communicate with people from different backgrounds in the future.

4. Residence and Daily Life

I stayed in the university residence and shared a room with a student from Australia. Living with someone from another country was a new experience, but we gradually created a comfortable routine by respecting each other's schedules and personal space. Sharing a room also gave us many opportunities to talk about our daily experiences and learn about each other's cultures outside the classroom.



Residence facilities: shared bedroom, kitchen, outdoor swimming pool, and laundry room

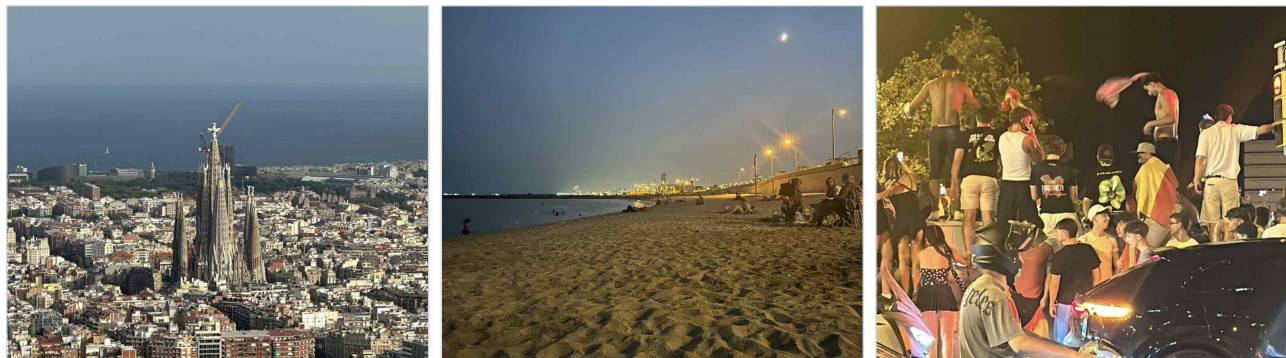
The room was spacious enough for two people and included beds, desks, storage space, and a small kitchen. Having a sink, stove, refrigerator, and basic cooking area inside the residence was especially useful because it allowed me to prepare simple meals instead of eating out every day. This helped reduce living expenses and made the residence feel more like a temporary home than a hotel.

The outdoor swimming pool directly in front of the residence was another advantage. Barcelona was very hot in July, so the pool was a pleasant place to cool down and rest after class. A laundry room was also available within the residence complex. Although learning how to use unfamiliar facilities required some adjustment at first, they made a one-month stay much more convenient.

At the same time, living independently taught me to manage practical matters on my own, including meals, laundry, cleaning, transportation, and expenses. These may seem like small tasks, but handling them in a foreign environment made me more adaptable and responsible. The residence was not only a place to sleep; it was an important part of learning how to live with others and organize my own daily life.

5. Barcelona, Catalan Culture, and Personal Reflection

Barcelona was an ideal city for a month-long stay because urban life and the sea exist side by side. After class, I could explore architecture and cultural attractions, spend time at the beach, or simply walk through different neighborhoods. A Gaudí tour helped me understand how architecture can shape the identity of an entire city. Seeing the Sagrada Família within the wider Barcelona skyline was especially impressive because it showed how a historic artistic vision continues to influence the modern city.



Barcelona experiences: a Gaudí tour, an evening at the beach, and celebrations after Spain's World Cup victory

The city also offered many forms of cultural life, including theatre, opera, street performance, and public festivals. Through daily life and travel around Catalonia, I became more aware that both Spanish, often called Castilian, and Catalan are used in Barcelona. Signs, announcements, and conversations showed the strong pride local people have in the Catalan language and regional identity. This made me consider how language, culture, and urban space are closely connected.

I was also fortunate to be in Spain when the national team won the 2026 FIFA World Cup. After the final, people filled the streets with flags, music, car horns, and cheers. Experiencing the excitement of the winning country in person was very different from watching a major sporting event at home. It became one of the most vivid memories of my stay and showed how a shared event can temporarily unite an entire city.

Overall, the UAB Summer School gave me more than academic knowledge. The course changed my understanding of performance, the friendships increased my confidence in communication, and independent life in the residence helped me grow personally. Barcelona also taught me to look at a city through its public spaces, architecture, language, and community traditions. Although the program lasted only a few weeks, it broadened my perspective and made me more open to future opportunities to study, travel, and collaborate in an international environment.