Barcelona International Summer School

July 2019

The course

I took '**Big Data and Artificial Intelligence**' and '**Modern Statistical Computing in R**'.

How was the teaching different?

The Big Data course was **5 days long, with 3 hours of class each day**. This was roughly split up into 2 hours of theory and 1 hour of practical work on computing and using Python. I personally found the theory a little on the dry side but the coding sessions were interesting and very useful for the project at the end.

The course in R was **4 weeks long, 3 hours a day for 4 days a week**. This took part in a small classroom with approx. 15 students in total. It was more seminar style where we would learn the programme as the class goes by copying down code as the professor worked through examples and explained how to do things.

How was it examined?

For Big Data and Artificial Intelligence there **was one project worth 100%** which was due a few weeks after the course ended. My project used machine learning to categorize zoo animals and detect fraudulent transactions in credit card activity.

For Modern Statistical Computing there was some **class contribution** that counted towards a final grade, **an exam** on the final day as well as **a project** due on the day after the course ended. This was quite interesting to do and didn't take away much time from exploring Barcelona during my month there.

When my flight home got cancelled due to the weather!
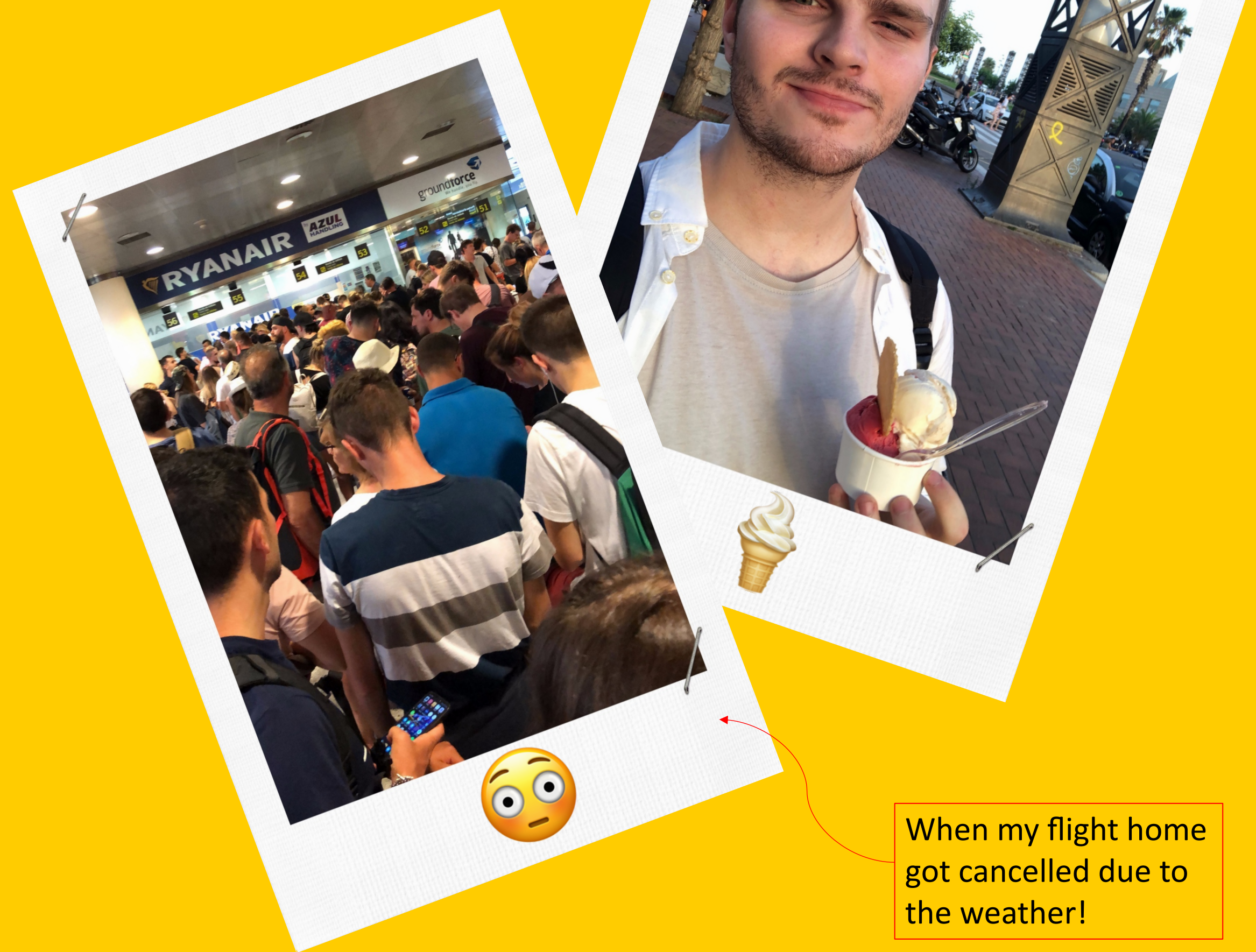
😎 **Weather / EL Tiempo / El Temps** ☀️

It was quite hot during the whole month, but usually not above 30 °C, however it was very humid making it seem much hotter than it was. In saying that when it rained it rained heavily! If you're going to Barcelona when packing I'd recommend you especially bring:
- An umbrella
- A lightweight rain coat
- Plenty of shorts
- Sunglasses
- A beach towel!

Exploring the City!
- Go up to Montserrat and enjoy the view
- Walk along the miles of beaches
- Walk up to Castell de Montjuïc and on the way down watch the fountain light show
- Visit La Sagrada Familia (It's worth all the money, trust me!)
- Go to Parc Güell and see Gaudi's buildings
- Do a tour of Recinte Modernista de Sant Pau

and there is so much more to do! Feel free to ask for more recommendations and make the most of the free trips that Pompeu put on for the international students.

Below was the accommodation I stayed in during my month in Barcelona.

Highlights and Top Tips
Best Bits
- Meeting locals and having them show you around what they love about Barcelona. They give the best restaurant recommendations.
- All of the food!
- Experiencing classes in another university.
- Developing my language skills as well as my programming skills.

Bad Bits
- The weather + an unconditioned room led to many sweaty nights
- My flight being cancelled the day of departure and having to plan getting home again.

Top Tips
- Make the most of your time – as tempting as it may be to nap during the hot days.
- Travel during the weekends with class mates if you have the funds – some went to Portugal and France!
- Remember to phone home and keep your friends and family updated – it's easy to forget!