STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
The three-part statement of purpose is the most important part of the application. It is reviewed by IPO and a faculty committee for clearly articulated:

• academic and/or intellectual goals;
• informed interest in the culture, the educational system, and/or people of the specific program site;
• preparation to face the cultural challenges in the classroom and community;
• maturity, motivation, and flexibility.

REQUIRED: do some RESEARCH and CITE your sources.
Address each of the following parts in a double-spaced essay of no more than 300 words each.

Part 1 - Country and Culture
Why this particular country and culture? Why do you want to engage with Chileans? Kiwis? South Africans in their country? Are there aspects of the Japanese economy, British literature, Indian foreign policy or Spanish psychology that fascinate you? Are there environmental or human rights struggles in Morocco or Thailand you want to learn more about? Are there ecosystems or organisms unique to the location?

Part 2 - Program
Which features of the host institution or program advance your goals (e.g. theme, course offerings, internships, cultural activities, etc.)? How? Go beyond how courses fulfill requirements to informed interest in the actual subject matter. Which features create challenges and how will you meet those?

Part 3 - Growth and Development
How will study abroad contribute to your development (intellectual, cultural, career, or otherwise) or overall life plans? What do you plan to DO upon return to Oxy and beyond graduation with your degree . . . and how do you hope study abroad will help?

6 characteristics of a strong statement:
1. Draws from theories, concepts, case studies, ideas or themes from your Oxy classes and applies them to the new setting. Make the connections!
2. Demonstrates how previous experiences or courses (CSP, Core, electives, major, minor) piqued your interest and prepare you to understand the host society.
3. Includes legitimate citations that inform both YOU and the reader that you are preparing yourself to maximize your learning. NY Times? Wall Street Journal? News sources from your destination on topics related to your goals? See also #1, above.
4. For language majors/minors, it goes deeper than linguistic functionality to the ideas and perspectives you expect to encounter.

6 ways to get your application rejected:
1. References to weather or food.
2. Lists of previous travel experiences unless you can demonstrate what you actually learned and how it will relate to your study abroad.
3. Useless facts about the host country that do not relate in any way to your specific goals.
4. Relying on only the program website, Wikipedia or “travel” websites for references. Read an article that prepares you to actually engage with the people and understand the society!!
5. Citing your ignorance (“because I’ve never been there” or “I don’t really know anything about . . . .”) as a motivation. Dozens of countries would fit those statements. You won’t get approved if you don’t do the research.
6. Using the host country as a launching-pad for travels. Sorry, but IPO is not a travel agent. Keep that private and tell us about the host country itself.