



EVERY DAY THE RIVER CHANGES: FOUR WEEKS DOWN THE MAGDALENA
by Jordan Salama '19

Pre-Read Assembly with Class of 2026, 5 September 2022

Index to Highlight Video of Pre-Read Assembly

(43' total)

Video chapter mark. Description.

Video time marker beginning – end (elapsed time in minutes and seconds)

1. Introduction of author Jordan Salama by Dean of the College Jill Dolan

0:00 – 1:35 (1'35")

Discussion between President Christopher Eisgruber '83 and author Jordan Salama

2. How the book took shape: coincidences, curfew, rejections, seminar, thesis.

1:38 – 7:03 (5'25")

3. Approach to the trip: risk; winging it safely. Travelling by yourself but never alone.

7:04 – 9:41 (2'37")

4. Trip to the source of the river. Support from, and fate of, Luiz Manuel Salamanca, and its effect on the shape of the book.

9:42 – 14:58 (5'16")

5. Creating meaningful encounters with remarkable people.

14:59 – 17:09 (2'10")

6. Discussions with elders in family and community.

17:10 – 19:34 (2'24")

7. Narrative frame: not an expert in anything, he could write the experiences of one young person.

19:35 – 21:28 (1'53")

8. A new kind of travel book. Power in journeys; writing with, not about, the people there, with empathy.

21:29 – 22:39 (1'10")

9. In the book, people spend their time with purpose and passion and meaning. What can we take away from those encounters?

22:40 – 24:14 (1'34")

10. The value of in-person experiences. Travel and study abroad helps you understand yourself. How you answer questions about yourself, is your subjective decision about what parts of your identity to put forward first.

24:15 – 28:03 (3'48")

11. Rejection is normal, and opens the door to other successes. Rejection from a summer internship led to more time in Colombia. The book got rejected 55 times by editors and publishers; but 1-54 is a winning record.

28:04 – 31:05 (3'01")

Student Q&A

12. The environment's effect on people, and people's effects on the environment, along the Magdalena.

31:06 – 33:16 (2'10")

13. The intersection between fiction and reality in his writing.

33:17 – 35:29 (2'12")

14. How being an outsider affects understanding of a complex place. Most interactions started face to face, creating connection and trust, then continued for years over social media. Be honest about your perspective.

35:32 – 38:20 (2'48")

15. Colombians' reactions to the book. Stories that encapsulate an existence. Stories of beauty and hope, informed by historical contexts.

38:23 – 40:52 (2'29")

16. His favorite places visited, and most meaningful experiences. Alejandra's story. Follow your passions at Princeton. Create moments of beauty and passion in your own community.

40:54 – 43:00 (2'06")