Edith's Major: Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies

Program: Pontificia Universidade Catolica-Rio Exchange, Spring

Academic Life: I strategically enrolled in a course that allowed me to learn Portuguese, as I did not have any previous knowledge of the language, and I enrolled in two courses that were taught in English. The Portuguese course mainly focused on practicing conversational Portuguese and strengthening grammar while the English courses focused on Brazilian History and Culture. The classroom setting was very welcoming and casual, and I always felt free to ask questions or raise discussion topics. My classmates in all three courses were international students who contributed with their unique home country perspectives. Although knowing that grades were mostly determined by a midterm and a final exam was stressful at times I was also glad to have less coursework throughout the semester. Overall, my academic experience in Rio de Janeiro was an opportunity for academic and personal growth that I would not have experienced at UW-Madison.

On Life in Brazil: I lived in an apartment complex in one of the most touristic and affluent neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro. I was only a ten-minute walk away from the beach and I had restaurants, grocery stores, food-markets and plazas within a walking distance as well.

Tip for Students Considering Study Abroad: Study abroad is a very unique opportunity to travel the world, explore your interests, meet people, learn about yourself and your boundaries, as well as challenge preconceived biases or stereotypes you might have about others. Your experience abroad will heavily depend on how you process the cultural shock, the challenging times, but also the great, fun-filled memories you will create. It is YOUR study abroad opportunity so make the most of it and make decisions that will fulfill your interests and desires.