Danielle’s Major: Anthropology; Languages and Cultures of Asia; Certificate South Asian Studies

Program: UW in India, Academic Year

Academic Life: We took classes primarily through the program house. They consisted of a Hindi course, History, and Field Methods to help with our research. Aside from those classes, we also took tutorials with local artisans or practitioners and conducted an independent research project. Our classes were only with students from the program.

Most Memorable Moment: Chasing Bhola the elephant down the street with my bike trying to get an interview with his mahavat (caretaker) Gafur.

Fieldwork: The fact that I was able to conduct extended fieldwork as an undergraduate anthropology student is amazing. I developed a proposal, research methods, and conducted field work while working and collaborating with a field assistant. I learned to adapt when informants began to close up regarding topics they viewed as private and how to make them feel comfortable.

Impact on Career Aspirations: I’ve had experience in India and have seen how some organizations attempt to help but have little impact. I will always have this frame of reference. Also, my Hindi knowledge is invaluable for relating with people from India in the future, something I hope my career will involve.

“I have realized that I’d much rather be challenged than be content. I don’t think I’ll ever come back from that.”