Program: SIT Public Health, Traditional Medicine, and Community Empowerment, Spring

Juan’s Major: Kinesiology

Academic Life: The courses we had in the traditional classroom setting were based on the themes of public health and traditional medicine. The classes mostly consisted of listening to speakers that specialized in each of those areas. We also spent some time learning outside of the classroom, traveling to the southern part of Chile where we stayed with host families who lived in the indigenous Mapuche community. We learned about their lifestyles, health system, healing beliefs and traditional practices. We also had a class on research techniques that became relevant during our month of Independent Research.

Housing: I lived with several host families but I had one main host family that I kept all my things with and returned to their house after every excursion outside of the city. My family was very devoted to making my experience a great one but they also allowed me to have time to myself and be with friends. I highly recommend staying with a host family if possible!

Benefit of Study Abroad: One of the biggest things that gives me an edge is the amount and variety of experiences I was able to have abroad. I studied interculturality at Chile’s first intercultural hospital and talked to patients about this system, developing my own research. I collected data, and analyzed and reported my findings. There’s something about learning issues first-hand from people going through them that you can’t obtain from sources other than people themselves.

Advice for Someone Considering this Program: It is an amazing program that really allows you to be exposed to different issues and people in Chile. You will get a chance to meet all kinds of people that believe in different things through your host family, workshops, excursions and independent research.

“There are moments you don’t get to have again, so enjoy them while they are available to you.”