Jennifer’s Major: International Studies with Honors in the Liberal Arts

Program: UW Global Gateway Program, Summer

Academic Life: On this program, my fellow Gateway participants and I took two classes at East China Normal University, located in the heart of Shanghai. Both classes were taught in English and included only the 15 Gateway students. One of the classes, an overview of Chinese history, was taught by a UW professor. The second class, China’s international relations, was taught by a Chinese professor, offering an interesting new perspective on international affairs. The classes were integrated with frequent excursions around the city, including trips to temples, museums, local markets, cultural activities and more. The site visits helped place classroom material in a larger context, making the academic aspects of the program much more relevant and interesting.

Most Memorable Moments: I really enjoyed the day I spent with a Chinese host family. We cooked dumplings, played ping pong, and spent time discussing life in China and the States. Getting to know a family in their home helped me to put specific names and faces to China, which I had often seen portrayed as a uniform mass of people.

Study Abroad and Jennifer’s Future Aspirations: As an honors student planning to major in international studies, complete the prerequisites for medical school, and still graduate in four years, I was uncertain about whether study abroad would fit into my undergraduate education. Through the Gateway program, I was able to study abroad and stay on track with my other academic goals. Studying abroad brought a really incredible experiential component to my education that I think will help me to be successful in the workplace.

“It was really incredible to learn about history while, to some extent, actually experiencing it.”

Jennifer visiting the tomb of Zhu Yuanzhang near Nanjing.