Ciara’s Major: Chemical Engineering

Program: UW Intensive Chinese Language, Summer

Academic Life: I took first and second semester Chinese over the 11 weeks classes were taught, I also took calligraphy. In my class there were only seven students and I was the only girl. My class was all American students from different Universities, though most were from UW Madison.

First Impressions: China was not at all what I expected it to be. I knew China is extremely densely populated so I expected to see many large buildings like in New York City, but I was surprised to find that much of China is actually very rural. There are huge apartment buildings that appear out of nowhere in cities and even in the countryside which seem very random since no one seems to live in them. Overall my first impression was that though China seemed very civilized, with huge skyscrapers, China is still a developing country.

Advice for Someone Considering this Program: Make sure you read a lot about the culture of China and particularly if you plan to travel try and learn about some of the differences in language between the different regions. It gets really confusing when asking people questions and they don’t pronounce things the same (especially numbers).

“I have changed so much after study abroad. I feel so much more confident and independent after all of the traveling I did.”

Ciara on a hill overlooking the ancient town of Lijiang, Yunnan Province.