

TIANJIN, CHINA

HAZEL SCHIRA

Program: UW Intensive Chinese Language, Summer

Hazel's Majors: Chinese; Biochemistry

Academic Life: My Chinese improved immensely simply because I was forced to speak Chinese in class and with my tutor every day. I took fourth year Chinese and Linguistics which allowed me to finish my Chinese major. Our teachers were all people who spoke Chinese as their native language as this allowed us to improve our listening as the teachers spoke normal speed.

New Perspectives: Living in China truly opened my eyes to how other people live. It takes some time to get used to the change in scenery, but I eventually learned to love it there. It is a great program, and the best way to improve your Chinese is to go outside and talk with the locals. Take advantage of every opportunity to experience the culture of China.

Self-Reflection: I had rarely lived away from Madison or my hometown before I went to China and was worried about being away for so long. As it turns out I am able to live far away from friends and family with no problems. I learned that I am independent and will have no trouble traveling to other countries or moving far away.

Memorable Moments: I enjoyed talking to people on the streets of Tianjin. Every day I would walk to a food cart for lunch and would talk to the cook as she made my food. It was difficult to understand her, but eventually I was able to get through her accent.

Tips for Future Students: Take every opportunity to wander around the city/area you are living to speak with the locals and observe their daily life. Do not stay inside because there is no better way to improve your language skills than to talk to native speakers. Make some friends that don't speak English and find a way to communicate with them.



Hazel boating down the Li River in Guilin during the school break.

“This may be out of your comfort zone, but it’s worth it.”

