

# TIANJIN, CHINA

LAUREN GONITZKE

**Program:** UW Intensive Chinese Language, Summer

**Lauren's Major:** English Creative Writing

**Academic Life:** I took third year Chinese, Business Chinese, and a one-credit independent study through the UW Intensive Chinese Language Program. Qian Laoshi, a TA from the UW Chinese department was the professor for both third year Chinese and Business Chinese, while graduate students from Tianjin Normal University were our TAs for third year. The one-credit independent study just consisted of writing an essay. The classrooms were in a building right across from the dorm/hotel for international students where we were staying. The classroom setting was very relaxed, almost informal and the structure was similar to Chinese classes at the UW. All my classmates were UW students.

**Advice to Someone Considering China:** My tip for studying abroad is to be open-minded. The Western/American way is not the "right" or "correct" way, just different. Be open, be respectful, try new things, and talk to the locals.

**What Lauren Learned From Her Experience:** Study abroad has changed the way I look at living abroad. It is definitely a unique experience to live in a foreign country as a guest, and to not be able to effortlessly communicate with those around you.

**Cultural Differences:** One major cultural difference between China and the US would have to be the way foreigners are treated. I was received with politeness, patience, and kindness when I stumbled through my words or did not fully comprehend what was said to me.



Lauren (bottom left) visiting a friend's house in Tianjin.

**“My understanding of Chinese society and culture has definitely expanded.”**

