Mai Seng Thao

XI’AN, CHINA

**Majors:** Early Childhood-Middle Childhood Elementary Education & Languages and Cultures of Asia

**Program:** UW Comparative Education in China

**Academics:** The program was focused on a comparative study between educational philosophy, policies, and planning here in the states and abroad in China. While we were there, we attended two different sections of a Comparative Education class where we presented and listened to topics that influence and surround the education system of America and China. Along with those two classes, we also had the chance to learn the Chinese language in a morning class, learn about the Chinese culture and history in the afternoons, and lastly, focus our minds through the practice of Tai Chi, a valued daily exercise in China.

**Personal Growth:** Study abroad has definitely changed me a lot—in many good and different ways. It challenged me to step out of my comfort zone, to acclimate myself and adjust to a foreign lifestyle. As a result of it, I feel more comfortable approaching unfamiliar situations and asking questions, whether that is related to someone’s culture or their way of thinking. It has also influenced my perspective on life itself and what I cherish most, as well as my actions toward achieving those ambitions.

**Favorite Memory:** It is very hard to choose from the numerous memories created abroad in China, but one of my most memorable experiences would have to be climbing the Great Wall of China. Although it may seem like an obvious choice, getting the chance to climb it meant so much more because of the people I met while in China and the history lessons that led up to that moment. Many of the friends and people I met in China had said to me that to be able to climb the Great Wall is every Chinese person’s dream because once you have, then you are a true hero (or real man) of the country as said by Mao Zedong. For those individuals who have not had the chance to do so, to value and want so much to climb the Great Wall, made it an inspirational experience for a visitor such as myself.

“**This is one of the best programs for someone to explore their ambitions in the education field. I would not hesitate to say, ‘Do it!’**"