Lauren Nelson
ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

Lauren’s Major: International Studies and Political Science

Program: Middlebury School in the Middle East at Alexandria University

Academic Life: I attended Alexandria University and completed the intensive Arabic language immersion program. So, I spent five hours a day in class studying Arabic. We were in the University complex but attended classes in a building just for foreign students. The classes were small and very intimate; it was neat to be in class with students from all over the world. The classes were taught by local professors from the University of Alexandria.

Language Exchange: I can speak a dialect of Arabic instead of just the Modern Standard we learn in class. It’s pretty cool to easily switch to Egyptian Arabic with other students on campus.

Most Memorable Experience: My most memorable experience from Egypt was spending the night in the white desert with Bedouin and watching the sun set, moon rise, and sunrise. We cooked our dinner over an open fire as they shared stories of their culture.

Advice for Choosing This Program: I would encourage you to talk to as many people as you can who have studied abroad in the Middle East. It is a much different experience than America, and I was unprepared how my identity would play such a large role into my entire experience. Be prepared for the host country’s perception of what it is “to be an American.” You may not fit the stereotype and that will be very difficult. At the same time, it’s important to let go any stereotypes you have of the host country as well.

“You will gain so much from this experience which will make it all worth it!”

Lauren participated in the Alexandria University Program in Alexandria, Egypt.