# VARANASI, INDIA
## MAI TIA VANG

**Program:** UW in India, Spring

**Mai Tia's Major:** Human Development & Human Studies

**Academic Life:** I took five different classes: Hindi, Tutorials, History, Field Methods, and Independent Studies. There were about nine students, all from UW-Madison. I also got to do independent research. I chose a topic I was personally interested in and from there conducted interviews, surveys, and focus groups to collect data. I researched about dentistry in India. I want to get into dental school to become a dentist. This independent research will show how interested I am in dentistry, and if I want to further my research someday, I can also use it as my starting point.

**Living in Varanasi:** It definitely became like a second home to me. I realized this when I stopped noticing all the different things around me and just walked through the streets as if I was raised there my whole life. The little things, like the crowdedness, didn't bother me anymore. It all became very normal and I got really used to it.

**Advice for Studying Abroad:** Do a lot of research about the place where you want to go. Don't just pick it because it seems cool. I think if a person has a real passion about the place, or has a bigger goal and things to look forward to, then it will help them stay positive when they are missing home and having a hard time. You have to be ready to accept challenges, be patient, and learn to go with the flow because nothing ever works out exactly as you plan and you need to learn how to be okay with that.

**Different Perspectives:** Studying abroad has definitely changed me in many ways, no doubt about it. I've gained different perspectives about the world and people around me. I think I see things in a different light now. I learned to be really patient, because it definitely tested my patience a lot.



Mai Tia, wearing a salwar kameez (traditional outfit), visiting Humayun's Tomb.

**"An independent research opportunity allows you to immerse yourself into the culture in many different ways."**