Program: Shanghai 1750 – 2050 History, Culture and Language  
Location: China  
Rank: Junior  
Major: Chinese and International Studies  

“During my second year I was looking in to opportunities to study abroad in China again. I had been on two prior trips to China where I was either intensely studying the Chinese language or touring different cities. For this third trip, I looked for a program that would give me an opportunity to practice my Chinese as well as learn and participate in new activities that I have not done in the past. I chose the Shanghai 1750 – 2050 History, Culture, and Language study abroad program because it focused on the history of Shanghai and I had not learned about that on either of my prior trips. Additionally, this program had a language component which was a huge bonus for me. Our resident director, Christopher Reed, was able to coordinate with the host university, East China Normal University, to place me into a class that fit with my level of Chinese.

Through this program I have learned about new and different areas of Shanghai that I had not seen previously, studied the history and importance of Shanghai as a global city, as well as improved my Chinese language speaking abilities. I feel that this enhanced my undergraduate experience as it gave me a new perspective in which to look at China, and specifically Shanghai, through. Not only was I able to experience the culture and society of Shanghai, but I was also able to directly apply it to my Chinese major by using my language skills and learning about Shanghai's importance to the world economy. This course enriched my academic experience by opening my eyes to the history of Shanghai. The history classes on the trip taught me how important Shanghai is as a city to the country of China, as well as its importance to the world. I was able to understand more about the
vast modernization and westernization of Shanghai in its’ recent years. This program gave me the ability to appreciate the city of Shanghai for the great strides that it has taken to become a more modern city over the years.

My favorite memory of my study abroad program was my Chinese language class that we had every morning at East China Normal University. My first day in the class I thought that I was way in over my head and thought to myself how hard and miserable this class was going to make my experience. However, a few days into the class, I found myself understanding more and more and I received a lot of help and praise from my classmates who were from all over the world. Meeting other students from across the globe (e.g. France, Italy, Russia, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Korea, etc.) who all had the same interest and goals as me to study the Chinese language was one of my favorite experiences. We were able to discuss cultural differences in Chinese and if someone didn't know how to say a word in Chinese, they spoke enough English to be able to convey their meaning through English. We also all became a very close knit group. I would go adventure with my classmates and we would speak Chinese together, which helped me use more conversational Chinese as opposed to the vocabulary that we learned in class. This experience taught me how much learning a foreign language can expand my ability to communicate with other people from across the globe.”