

1. tell what led you to Asian Studies and/or why it has been important to you;

I was always drawn to learning about Asian culture because of my Asian heritage, so I knew I wanted to study Chinese as a freshman at Clark. After I returned to Clark from studying abroad in China for six months, I knew I still wanted to continue pursuit of Asian Studies. Having the opportunity to turn my China study abroad blog into a directed study project and starting to take Japanese classes allowed me to turn my previous Asian Studies minor into a double major with Management. For me, Asian studies has been the best creative academic outlet for me to study what I'm really passionate about. It's been fundamental in developing my future academic and career goals and I will always be eternally grateful for the amazing people and experiences I've had during my time at Clark.

2. describe your time abroad in Asia

For the summer of 2016, I was based in Shanghai where I was taking classes in both English and Chinese at a local university while also completing a finance internship with Melia Hotels International, a Spanish hotel company. I then went to Beijing for the fall semester of 2016 where I was enrolled in a Chinese language intensive program. Here, I was held to a language pledge where I only had to read, write and speak in Chinese for the entirety of the program.

Living abroad in China was one of the most transformative times of my life. It would be difficult to summarize the entire experience in a few sentences, but overall it was a very positive. Being immersed in a new culture, learning a new language and meeting new people from all over the world is exactly the kind of challenge I love to dive into. The two things I really treasure the most was the getting to live with my Chinese roommate in Shanghai and getting to complete a solo travel trip across the country. My Shanghainese roommate was named Cookies and she was so sweet the entire time we lived together. She helped me explore a whole new side of the city as a local and we're still in touch to this day. I also really valued getting to travel all by myself around the country. The independence, maturity and confidence it instills in you is unlike any other and it was one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences during my time in China.

3. finally mention what your plans are for next year (and beyond?)

Next year, I will be continuing my graduate studies as part of Clark's accelerated 5th year degree program where I will earn my M.B.A. After that, my future career aspirations would be to work in the fields of either international education or cross-cultural communications. I also hope to live abroad again at some point, either in Scandinavia or Japan where I can also continue my graduate studies in order to obtain my Ph.D. in socio-linguistics.