

AURA Report- Karen Resnick

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This summer thanks to the generosity of the AURA, I was able to study abroad in Nanjing, China. I was a part of the Rice in China program, a six week intensive language and intercultural communication program. Led by Dr. Meng Yeh, we not only studied differences in language use in-class, but also interviewed locals and gathered data to compare Chinese and American values. Outside academics, the program was also supplemented with a home stay and community service. As a group we traveled to several historical sites like the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum, Nanjing City Wall and Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to go abroad this summer. As an Asian Studies major going to Asia for the first time, I was more than excited. Through the program, my language and communication skills have grown tremendously and it was a new experience to be immersed in different culture. In addition to working on our Chinese vocabulary and grammar (aided by the language pledge), we also spent a lot of time learning about compliments, requests, and giving respect. I've come to find there is much more to communication than simply knowing how to form sentences. Our everyday interactions were proof of the differences in manners and values. We also had the opportunity to perform service while in Nanjing. I appreciated that this took us out of the university and let us see the work that organizations perform in the communities. What I've learned this summer has motivated me to continue working at my Chinese to try to get to as close to fluency as possible. I hope that I can use my abilities to build connections with people either here in the US or abroad in China.