

Shanghai: Study Abroad Summer 2018

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Overview

During the weekends, we went on class trips to Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, and various gardens of emperors and high ranking officials. We travelled everywhere by bus, which I enjoyed because I like seeing the journey from one place to the next just as much as seeing the destination. This also gave us the opportunity for a little down time. For the farther away places, we stayed overnight so we could have enough time to explore the area.

Class Time

The first half of the summer we took Advanced Chinese 1: an average week consisted of a three hour long class each afternoon with some additional miscellaneous lectures in Chinese history, economics, and art (paper cutting, calligraphy, etc).

The second half of the program we moved onto Advanced Chinese 2, which took place during the morning with the same three hour length. Before each lesson we took a written quiz on the previous words we studied (called "ting xie"- literally translating to listen and write) and then learned a new set of about fifteen or twenty characters. This is the first half of a typical class. The second bit focused on grammar, correct usage of words, sentence structures, and writing.

Video

One Second Everyday

Each day I filmed a short bit of what we were doing. In the editing process, I sifted out a lot the class time as the visuals tended to be a bit less exciting comparatively, so the end result is more travel based. Altogether, I had an amazing time- this was by far the best summer experience I could have hoped for and I'm so happy that I was able to go because of the generosity Jennings Family Fun. Many many thanks! [Click here to see the video!](#)

Thoughts

Some Final Remarks

I had a bit of an unusual case over the summer. Before arriving in China, about two weeks or so, my visa application was lost in the mail and I had to go on a mini trek from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia to New York to get new paperwork for it. I arrived at SISU around three in the morning and was just about dead. Going into the program, we heard good things from our Chinese professors (Yu Laoshi and Liu Laoshi in my case) as well as previous students, but we weren't exactly sure about any of the specifics, so I didn't really have any expectations other than to learn a bit of Mandarin. And these expectations were blown out of the water!

The study abroad program is primarily focused on studying a new language which it does through lecture and immersion, but it also goes far beyond the scope of academics. Initially our group was a touch awkward together- none of us really knew each other, but by the end we were like a family. I would absolutely recommend the SISU program to anyone because any expectations will be met and more.