Classes

Here at Fudan, our coursework consists of a Chinese language class, "Culture and Health", "Doing Fieldwork in China", and one elective. For my Chinese language class, I was placed in Heritage Level 1 since I could speak a bit of Mandarin but couldn't read or write a single character. Okay, I knew how to write 一, 二, 三 (1,2,3) but that was about it. The rest of the classes are taught English. For my elective course, I chose "Shanghai Studies," a fun class that includes four fieldtrips to important sites around Fudan. My class schedule is pretty nice: one or two classes Monday through Wednesday with no classes on Thursday and Friday!

Shanghai Studies

Our first field trip was to the community garden which was about a 15 minute walk from our dorms. There are numerous weekly events hosted here which really helps bring the surrounding economically diverse neighborhoods together. Notice the stark contrast between the apartments on the left and right.

All of the plants and produce in the garden were planted by the children from the surrounding community.

The white tube is basically a trash bin for dog poop. Only natural fertilizer allowed here XD

Lynette holding a 丝瓜. Not sure what it's called in English, but it's a type of melon.

Also not sure what this is called, but the white liquid dripping out is milk!
Chinese Heritage Level 1

Twice a week, I met with Brittany, my yuban (language partner), and she would help me with my pronunciation and character writing. She is a PhD student currently researching pancreatic cancer, so we talked about science a lot and became pretty good friends :) She even gave me a mooncake during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

For our fieldwork class, we visited the Shanghai Power Station of Art featuring the work of Li Shan, a pioneer of BioArt. One question that Li Shan contemplated was what would happen if DNA regulation did not exist. These half human/half insect models were inspired by that question.

Eddie is the only other person in my Chinese class so we get a lot of practice speaking Chinese during class. Wang Laoshi (Ally) is our teacher, and she's amazing! She was a Chinese TA back at WashU, and is currently applying for graduate programs in America. She's great to be around, so I love spending time with her outside of class.

For one of our classes we were honored to have Sharon Kaufman, a renowned medical anthropologist, as a guest speaker.
Suzhou

The international student program (SSDPP) at Fudan is integral to making things run smoothly for the foreign students. They take care of all the logistics, from helping us register for courses to sorting through our clinic/hospital schedule. And they even plan day trips for us! The first trip they organized was to Suzhou, a city known for their canals, bridges, and classical gardens.

Humble Administrator’s Garden

This garden was really pretty, so I’ll let you enjoy the pictures without too many captions.

Besides the WashU crew, there were a lot of other international students that came on this trip, including several students from Boston University (BU).

The Humble Administrator’s Garden is the largest garden in Suzhou.

Wash U + BU

Matt, Austin, Jerry

David, Michaela, and Velimir

The cute couple

Photogenic Cintia
Suzhou Silk Factory

The next place we went to was a silk factory where we learned about producing silk products.

Group photo in front of the silk factory.

Depiction of the various cocoon sizes and the corresponding larva stages of the silkworm.

Silk worms eating Mulberry leaves.

Matt seemed excited to hold a worm.

Ryan not so much.

Suzhou Old Street: Shan Tang Street

After lunch, we went to Shan Tang Street, an old famous, historical, and cultural town in Suzhou. It's known for its old architecture and commerce.

Since Shan Tang is a historical commerce hub, there was a river that ran through the middle of town.

Boat ride! It was interesting to see the historic buildings and old residential areas.
Marriage Markets and More

Spending a day at Suzhou was the major event during these two weeks, but there were other exciting activities as well. Here are some notable highlights.

Historically (and even today) Chinese parents would advertise their children and try to find them a suitable spouse at People’s Square. For fun, Jerry and Matt had this idea of creating flyers of themselves and then advertising it in People’s Square. As you can tell from the photo, a lot of us decided to do the same.

Our largest Walmart haul yet. I’m not sure how we managed to walk more than mile back to our dorms with all that stuff!

Speaking about trips from Walmart. One time as we were walking back, it started to rain so hard that even umbrellas were ineffective. We were drenched after the mile trek back but it was a good bonding experience.

Yes, that’s a Nerf gun. The boys bought three. I’m not ashamed to say, shooting them with it was pretty fun. XD

I absolutely love these public Ofo bikes. You can basically ride these bikes anywhere for 15 cents a ride. Just download an app, unlock the bike with it, ride anywhere, and leave the bike wherever you want. Michelle and I were both hesitant to ride because 1) China traffic is somewhat intense 2) I’ve only been on a bike 4 times before. But after I started riding, I LOVED it. It’s so convenient!

Caroline is a friend of my grandparents and a member of the local church I go to. She has helped me tremendously since I’ve arrived, from driving me to meetings to helping me open a bank account. I can’t thank her enough!

For one of our group trips, we went to an OB/GYN hospital where we got the opportunity to observe laparoscopic surgeries!

Post workout in our suite.
There is a large shopping center in Wujiaochang (where Walmart is) that has many good restaurants. One unique place inside the mall is called City Mart. I felt like I was in a circus when I walked through it.

Michelle and I found this good sushi place inside City Mart.

A lot of us refer to this popular restaurant as "the place by happy lemon" which has great tangbaos (soup dumplings).

Michelle and I finally got around to cooking! I made egg with cabbage (top), and Michelle made potatoes (left) and tomato bakchoy (bottom). We didn’t have a rice cooker so we bought some fried rice from the stand by our dorms.

We cooked too much for the two of us so we invited Velimir over!

And we actually cooked a second time! This time Ashley ate with us.

A couple of us tried this upscale restaurant on Da Xue Lu (a street known for college startup shops and cute restaurants) which had really good xiaolongbao (small soup dumplings).

I ordered this really good tea egg and...

...these cute pumpkin-shaped, taro-filled dumplings.
Until Next Time!

The following week was China’s week-long National Holiday which spanned from October 1-6. Many of us saw this as an opportunity to travel, so a few of us set out for a weekend trip to Hangzhou! But that's for the next post :) I'll leave you here with a group photo of the Hangzhou crew.

Left to Right: yours truly, Jerry, Justin, David, Ashley, and Matt

谢谢阅读

Thanks for reading!