CHOOSE CHINA

Grady College

2016
Have you ever dreamed of hiking the Great Wall of China, or watching Tiananmen Square light up at night? Ever wanted the opportunity to be one-on-one with the top leaders of international advertising and public relations agencies? Brave enough to go to the other side of the world, maybe eat fried scorpion, or toboggan down a mountainside?

The Grady Choose China Program offers students like us the opportunity to immerse ourselves in one of the world's fastest growing and leading industries in the field, as well as giving us an unforgettable cultural experience.

Grace Zeitlin
Account Executive
Major: Advertising & Psychology

- “What seems like a world away from home, China’s strong culture, history, and work ethic challenged and empowered me. Each agency visit inspired me to further pursue my interests in this field while every moment in the city made me want to pack my bags and move to China.”

Rachel Terns
Creative Writing & Editorial Director
Major: Public Relations & Fashion Merchandising

- “This study abroad is easily one of the best things I’ve done in college. An absolutely life-changing experience - I now have a far more comprehensive global perspective of the world, as well as newfound inspiration for my own career goals.”

Forrest Newton
Graphic and Social Media Strategy Director
Major: Advertising & Art

- “Had I not taken this incredible journey, I would have never been able to comprehend just how different, yet strikingly similar, the Chinese culture is to our own. I never would have known how much I love this beautifully bizarre place.”
the subway
With 14 lines and over 300 stations, the Shanghai subway reflects the fast-paced, intense life of the city. Different stations with unique designs are all colorful, modern, and clean - filled with advertisements in every possible crevice imaginable. The calm empty trains in the middle of the day sharply contrast the overflowing cars during rush hour, but make sure to push your way on and off the train or else your commute just got one stop longer.

the language barrier
The language barrier was apparent the minute we stepped off the flight and were fully surrounded by words, intonations, and written characters we could not understand. Among the confusion we experienced the majority of the time, we were able to pick up on a few phrases such as hello, thank you, and how are you. While communicating was frustrating at times, we all adopted a form of broken English and hand gestures that together seemed to do the trick.

the fashion
Shanghai is definitely considered the fashion capital of China for a reason. Walking the streets when we first arrived, we could not help but notice the influence the fashion industry had on street style and retail - from luxury, mass markets, numerous fashion retailing districts, to giant shopping malls. Meanwhile, away from the spotlight, side streets offer a totally different kind of fashion - small boutiques and local designer stores. Many worldwide brands and designers were familiar to me, but other fashion trends - such as extreme platform shoes, androgynous looks, and athleisure designs - had their own Asian cultural flair. 🌍
business as usual

This is the “classroom” experience of our trip. We have appointments with many professional agencies who specialize in advertising, public relations, and digital media. Representatives from each agency speak to us personally about their company, strategies, and offer advice as we enter our own professional careers.

Shanghai Normal University

Professor Wang Zhao of Shanghai Normal University met with us to discuss the university and their advertising department where she teaches video production and consumer behavior. One of her students presented work from this past semester of a social experiment video regarding gender roles and another student of Professor Zhao's detailed the importance of QR codes in Chinese advertising. The university has a very impressive and awarded program with a hands-on learning approach.

Burson-Marsteller

At Burson-Marsteller, we were introduced to Cody Roberts, a consultant mainly dealing with sports clients. We also met Juliette Zhu, an assistant client executive, and Jambo Xie, an associate. Mr. Roberts and Ms. Zhu discussed the differences between many Western and Eastern ideologies and how they affect the media in China. Mr. Xie presented multiple case studies involving technology, airline, and consumer goods clients that all involved digital media campaigns.

PHD Media Worldwide

At PHD Media Worldwide, we met with Kindy Lei, AOR Director of Unilever China, who spoke with us about the “new normal” in the Chinese market. She specifically highlighted media planning, especially buying outdoor advertisements and the differences in outdoor in China versus the United States. PHD Media offers a creative global communications planning and buying network for their clients including Unilever and Bayer.

LKK Design

“As a visual artist and fervent sketcher, I was immediately blown away by the personnel of the office, all of which seemed to be sketching product designs or creating beautiful graphic designs for packaging and in-store branding. My career dream is to one day be in charge of designing the entire atmosphere of brick-and-mortar businesses, creating their brand image from the inside-out. Branding and surface design seemed to be one of this company’s primary services, and their portfolio of past campaigns is impressive and fascinating.”
- Forrest Newton

Hearst Magazines China

“As a Public Relations student who is also studying Fashion Merchandising, visiting Hearst Magazines China showed me there is truly a way to combine my two dream jobs into a single shiny package. With clients that are huge in the global fashion industry - such as Elle, Harper's Bazaar, and Esquire - Hearst directly works in the area I have always been passionate about and inspired by - fashion and culture. As one of the world's largest publisher of magazines, the chance to meet Hearst's general manager, Hugues de Vautibault, along with their chief operating officer, Yvonne Wang, was almost surreal.”
- Rachel Terns

OgilvyOne China

Here, we had the privilege of meeting with their president, Jacco ter Scheggete. He spoke to us about the complexity of China’s market, on an economic and cultural scale, and also explained Ogilvy's philosophy of combining scientific thought and process with creativity and innovation. OgilvyOne China is the number digital agency in China, with top clients including: H&M, Carnival, Budweiser, and IBM.
Wuzhen is one of six small historic water towns that lies in the southern region of the Yangtze River. On the east side of Wuzhen, you can explore where they make hand-dyed fabric from indigo plants, sample their homemade rice wine, and explore the Ancient Bed Museum. The west side is more developed and easier to navigate, with wider roads and less tourists. Make sure you go visit the large koi fish begging for food throughout the west side!

choosechina Boarding our boat - about to take a cruise down the Huang Pu River! #nightlife

choosechina View from our restaurant! Rooftop dining at its finest 🌙🍲📚
Walking around Mainland China and especially near the tourist attractions, we instantly became celebrities to many Chinese tourists and locals who may rarely see Westerners like ourselves in their day to day life. At first, we did not mind the occasional picture, but the glamour of the camera faded very quickly. It was a domino effect – if you took a picture with one person, then all of a sudden there was a group waiting for their turn. Of course we still did not mind when someone asked politely or if there was ever a child involved, but some people were a little more aggressive as they shoved their cameras in front of us or even tried to film us without us noticing. At times it felt like we were a show, as people would point, take videos, and even laugh at us while not breaking eye contact. We were relieved to find, as we entered Hong Kong, a more international and diverse population that did not feel the need to follow us like paparazzi.

bargaining

We visited the Silk Market, which is seven floors of individual stores with a wide range of products available at low prices - if you know how to bargain, that is. While most items have price tags on them, the price tags are extremely high compared to what you can actually get the product for with the right skills and perseverance. We found that the most effective way to get the best price is to start with an offer that is about 75 percent lower than the sticker price, then to slowly increase as the salesperson starts to meet you in the middle. Not working? Another great technique is to simply walk away from the store and you most likely will not even make it out the door before the price drops again. We call this the “playing hard-to-get” tactic. At the end of the day, people in the markets are just trying to make a sale and are willing to negotiate if you stand your ground. It is easy to get flustered in the whirlwind of people trying to lure you in their stores and all of the flashy items, but remaining in control while bargaining is key to a lower price.

Forrest found a knock-off pair of Kanye West + Adidas “Yeezys” and walked away a proud owner.

Manufacturer’s Suggested Retail Price: $200 USD
Silk Market’s Offering Price: ¥1,000 YN, or $150 USD
The amount Forrest paid: $85 USD
We checked one wonder of the world off our lists as we walked along the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall. We took a chairlift to the top and then began trekking along what felt like never-ending stairs until we arrived at a watchtower with a stunning view of the Great Wall and surrounding greenery. As we stood in the watchtower, we contemplated the manpower and craftsmanship to build such a long-lasting, massive structure and were completely in awe of where we were standing. To make leaving such a breathtaking sight a little easier, we tobogganed down the mountain, racing through the trees and trying not to crash into the person in front of us.

The city of Beijing is built around the Forbidden City, an ancient palace that was home to 24 emperors throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties. With striking interiors and detailed artifacts, the palace is the heart of the city, its culture, and its history. Directly in front of the Forbidden City lies Tiananmen Square, a large gathering space known for its role in many cultural and historical aspects of Chinese history. At the square, you can watch the flag raising ceremony early in the morning and its lowering in the early evening right before the square and Forbidden City are lit up.
Hong Kong

Until 1997, Hong Kong was under British rule, and the influence of this history are still distinguishable today. While crossing the street, make sure to look the correct way as cars in Hong Kong drive on the left side of the road. It is also noticeable as people tend to walk on the left side of the sidewalk and escalators are also to your left. On the street, you may notice a lot of double decker buses adopted from British culture and you may even hear words pronounced with slight British accents. Other British words will make an appearance throughout your stay in Hong Kong such as “lift” instead of “elevator.” The city depicts Western and Eastern cultures colliding and meshing together to make Hong Kong a unique blend of two worlds.

Culture Shocked

British Invasion: History 101

“Hello” - in Cantonese
你好 (nǐ hǎo)

“Hello” - in Mandarin
你好 (néih hóu)

Mandarin is the official language of China, but Cantonese is the language used in certain areas, including Hong Kong. Tense and complicated government relations between Mainland China and Hong Kong can be noticed when speaking Mandarin in Hong Kong. If you choose to use Mandarin, some people will ignore you and would even prefer broken English.
Strategic Public Relations Group Limited
We had the pleasure of meeting with the chairman, Richard Tsang. SPRG is one of the largest public relations firms in Hong Kong that originally started as a four-person staff. Over the years, the group grew immensely and became incredibly respected and accomplished. Mr. Tsang spoke to us about the ways that the industry differs between Chinese and Hong Kong markets, down to details such as how journalists’ approaches towards PR agencies differ.

Edelman Hong Kong
While visiting Edelman Hong Kong, we were lucky enough to meet Adrian Warr, Head of Corporate Communications Hong Kong and Head of Employee Engagement North Asia and Zamir Khan, Senior Manager of Marketing and Business Development. Mr. Warr detailed the structure of Edelman as well as offered valuable résumé and interview advice to eager ears. In addition to meeting with Mr. Warr and Ms. Khan, we were introduced to multiple members of different departments who each presented a recent campaign or report. Our trip to Edelman was an enlightening and thought-provoking experience.

BBDO Hong Kong Limited
“As an advertising student, you learn about the history and development of the advertising world and one agency that is always mentioned is BBDO. From coining the term ‘brainstorm’ to being the number one awarded creative agency in the world over the last decade, BBDO’s work is innovative, effective, and timeless. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to meet the Corporate Communication Manager in Greater China, Poi Yu. Ms. Yu shared her insights on the Chinese market focusing on the middle class and the changing dynamics occurring in the market. I enjoyed discussing how to create works that work in China and am inspired by the array of advertisements she shared with us.”
- Grace Zeitlin

Above is a picture of the whole group posing in the lobby of BBDO with Poi Yu, the Corporate Communications Manager in Greater China for BBDO.

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Adrian Warr, of Edelman Hong Kong, explaining the role of directors, managers, and employees in a highly leveraged agency.
Feeling glamorous for the day at the Venetian Hotel Casino!

The city of Macau is a fascinating blend of Chinese and Portuguese culture. A one hour ferry ride took us to this densely populated peninsula, where we explored beautifully tiled streets, temples, ancient Catholic churches, and even a casino.

choosechina Our Graphic & Social Media Director, sweet Forrest, posing next to the beautiful Victoria Harbour!
Things We Learned

1) stinky tofu tastes like it sounds

2) Be prepared, pack a “mom” bag. Everyone will make fun of you until you are the only one with hand sanitizer and tissues.

3) Don’t be afraid to throw some elbows to make your way on and off the subway - it’s almost necessary.

4) Get ready to work those thigh muscles as you perfect the squat toilet.

5) Practice your chopstick skills because you will never see a fork and knife once you are here.

6) Bring a converter before your laptop dies and all your friends at home can’t be jealous of all your cool ~international~ posts.

7) Savor the water bottles the hotel provides and avoid drinking tap water at all costs.

8) Download a VPN for Shanghai and Hong Kong or say goodbye to Google for a few weeks.

9) Luggage gets lost, but if you pack extra clothes in your carry-on, then you will just have a funny story to tell.

10) Live in the moment. Wifi is limited and slow, but the independence from your phone will allow you to enjoy your surroundings like never before.

*All pictures belong to Grady Choose China Program, and content created by us*
Oh, the Places you’ll go!

Every Maymester since 2014, the Advertising & Public Relations Department of the Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication has offered the Global China Study Abroad Program to any University of Georgia student interested in the field of advertising in China. We, Emaline Carter, Emily Gimbert, and Chastity Van Dyke, are three of nine lucky students given the opportunity to participate in this amazing experience.
Unlike many of the modernized buildings of the city, the Garden's buildings featured architecture typical of most people's archetypical idea of China. The bridges, pavilions, and bogotas were woven over a pond full of ducks, koi fish, and turtles. At the main gate of the garden was the rain folding pavilion, the tallest in the entire imperial garden. It was amazing that in the middle of such an industrialized city we were able to marvel at one of greatest cultural and natural things that Shanghai had to offer.

As with most of China, bartering is a common practice in Shanghai's markets. Despite the various malls that sold designer brands such as Gucci, Michael Khors, and Balmain, anyone could get just about anything for less than half of the asking price when visiting a market. We made a visit to the Tianzifang art district in downtown Shanghai which housed hundreds of vendors and artists selling a variety of products like souvenir key chains, action figurines, shoes, or silk dresses.

While in Shanghai, we made a visit to the Yuyuan Garden. The Yu Gardens were surrounded by Mart vendors. The attraction served as another opportunity for us to practice our bartering skills. Emily and Emaline definitely took advantage of this and both purchased a selfie stick for 10 yuan, which with the exchange rate at the time was equivalent to about $1.60.

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We also had the opportunity to visit one of the tallest buildings in the city, the Shanghai World Financial Center Observatory. The tower has office spaces, a shopping mall, and hotels. Our goal was to visit the observation decks on the 97th and 100th floors. Within the top 10 floors of the building is a hole, essentially making the top of the tower look like a purse handle. On the 97th floor, you can see the entirety of the city. Many of us attempted to identify our hotel, the Pearl Tower, the nearest subway station, and various locations from the high altitude. Yet on the 100th floor, while you can also see an amazing view of the city, you can also walk on the sky. The floors are thick glass, making up the underbelly of the “purse handle”. If you aren’t terribly afraid of heights, it makes for an amazing experience.

Karaoke is another staple of Shanghai, whose reputation we underestimated. In the United States we’re accustomed to the activity as either a pastime enjoyed with family at home, or a cheap alternative to a birthday dinner. Yet, in Shanghai, many young adults go to karaoke as a part of their nightlife experience. During our stay, we rented out a room in a karaoke bar downtown. The entire karaoke building was grand with gold upholstery, life sized teddy bears, and bedazzled mannequins as well as thousands of songs available for us to sing in both English and Chinese. It was evident that karaoke is seen not as just a mere leisure activity but as an extravagant experience.

Your Daily Dose of Culture
While in Shanghai, we met Yiweh Xu and Yue Shen, two students from Shanghai Normal University who also served as our tour guides for the entirety of our stay. They brought us to their University which was a small, yet quaint community, that offered a stark contrast to the robust University of Georgia. We also met one of the advertising department professors, Dr. Wong and networked with students to learn more about their program. It was interesting to see how students are prepared for the advertising field in the context of the Chinese market. Their program has a lot of diverse course offerings, including message strategy, media planning, consumer behavior, production, and more, covering both the strategic and creative sides of the field.

The first agency in Shanghai that we had the pleasure of visiting was Hearst Magazines. We met with Hugues De Vaultibault, the DGM and Corporate Sales Director, who explained Hearst’s role as a magazine publisher of titles like Elle, Elle Decor, and Marie Claire. We were able to get insight on how the magazine industry works as an advertising medium, and furthermore, how it has adjusted to the switch from traditional to digital media while still maintaining a clean aesthetic look for the content. Furthermore, we discussed with Vautibault the characteristics of the Chinese market and how Hearst has adjusted its content with titles like Feminina and Elle Men.

At OgilvyOne China, we met the President, Jacco ter Schegget, who showed us a brief history of the agency, its clients, China’s market characteristics, and the agency’s strategy for its work. This was a wonderful opportunity not only because we got the chance to meet the president of one of the top agencies in the world, but also because we were able to have an interactive conversation. We discussed extensively the growth of the Chinese market in domestic production and innovation, and also how in the future we may reach a point where China becomes a primary influencer of westernized markets rather than the reverse situation, which holds true today. These sort of ideas offered a great perspective into China’s value as a market.
At LKK Design, we met Yan Zhang, the Service Design Department Director and Business Innovation Consultant. Zhang presented us the goals and functions of the agency in industrial design, advertising, marketing, brand development, and more. We also had an engaging conversation about the agency’s service strategy development process. Afterwards, we were given the opportunity to participate in a workshop ourselves to redesign the service strategy of a client. This was a lovely experience and we appreciated being able to get a taste of what the strategic process is like in design companies like LKK.

During our visit at PHD, we met the [AOR] Director, Kindy Lei. With her we discussed PHD’s role in the industry as the coordinator of media platforms like Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent following the creation of a client’s media plan from an agency like Ogilvy. We also talked in depth about the rise in popularity of the use of QR codes in advertising initiatives. In so doing, companies use the code graphic during television programming or commercials so that consumers can scan, have access to the products used in the programming, and make a purchase utilizing an online payment platform such as WePay, thus streamlining consumer purchase decision making significantly. Also what was largely interesting was the campaign to redefine the term, “Made in China”. The idea is to reverse a sentiment that Chinese products are cheap and low quality, a concept that is already becoming apparent. This shift in Chinese pride for domestic luxury items could change relationships between nations in the future, which we found is consistent with the statements made by Schegget of Ogilvy One in our previous visit.

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Our final agency visit in Shanghai was with the public relations and communications firm, Burson-Marsteller. We met with consultant Cody Roberts and assistant client executive Juliet Zhu, with whom we discussed the Chinese market and Burson-Marsteller’s role in public affairs, finances, and crisis management. Overall, the agency places a high priority in delivering tangible results to clients through communication strategies that are deemed most appropriate based off of their consumer base.
While in Shanghai, we took a day trip to the Wuzhen Watertown, which is a small rural village about a 2 hour drive away from the city. The village itself is practically a time capsule, somehow managing to preserve the charm of a civilization relatively untouched by modern society. The Ancient Watertown is often referred to as the “Venice of Shanghai” as it sits on the Grand Canal which provides a majority of the residents’ transportation via ferry. Overall, it provided a stark contrast to the busy, fast-paced environment of Shanghai.

First, we took a tour of the East side, which features the more ancient characteristics of the Watertown. There were multiple museums exhibiting displays of ancient Chinese customs and current practices by the Wuzhen community including the ancient bed and wedding museums. One of the highlights of our visit was the rice wine display. Not only were we shown how the wine is made, but we were also allowed to try a small sample of it. Chastiy remembers that, “It tasted like rubbing alcohol.”

Afterward, we visited the indigo dye display. Our tour guide, Jenny, detailed the process of how they hand dye the pieces of cloth with patterns and hang them to dry.

Next, we rode a bus and took a ferry to the West side of the Watertown. While it was still relatively untouched, it was a bit more modern than the East in architecture, stores, and restaurants.
After departing Shanghai, we headed for the capital city, Beijing. Upon our arrival, one of the first things to take us by surprise was the amount of people trying to take photos of us. We had been forewarned that it was a common show of curiosity in China; we even had it happen a few times in Shanghai. Yet, while we were visiting the Water Cube and Bird's Nest Olympic Park, one curious tourist with a photo request, quickly turned into 10. Many people would even take photos from afar without asking. Our tour guide, Merry, explained to us that because Beijing is the capital, more people from various, especially rural, cities are often visiting. Such people often haven't seen people of non-Asian descent outside of television before, thus the astonishment, curiosity, and need for pictures. Considering that many of us have very distinct features like Emaline's blonde hair or Chastity's thick curls, it's understandable that we'd garner so much attention.

One of our first tourist destinations was Tiananmen Square, located at the center of Beijing. Merry, had explained that the Square is where the flag is raised every morning at sunrise. The ceremony is basically held at the same esteem that many hold the pledge of allegiance in the United States. Tiananmen also acts as the gate to the Forbidden City, our next destination. Enclosed by the walls of the Imperial City, the Forbidden City is the preserved palace and political space for the royal families of the Ming dynasty through the Qing dynasty until 1912. With over 900 buildings, we were astounded by the sheer size of the palace itself, but even more so with all of the rich artifacts and symbolism woven throughout all of its architecture.
Not far from the Forbidden City is the Temple of Heaven, which falls in the Outer City southeast of the Inner City. The temple was historically often utilized by the emperors living in the Forbidden City to communicate with Gods and/or regular religious practices. As we walked through we noted that the temple had altars and spaces for prayer like many other temples. They also had stones in the center of certain buildings that believers could stand on to literally communicate with God.

Each building has a purpose from weddings or political meetings to housing. Furthermore, the importance of each building is indicated by the number of dragons on the roof. Dragons are not only recognized as ancestors in Chinese culture, but are utilized to ward off bad luck and to protect the home. Another symbol we found interesting were lions. Lion statues were posted outside of gates throughout the city. Situated in pairs, one lion holds a ball beneath his paw. This lion is regarded as The Father holding what is symbolic of power. The other lion, The Mother, rests its paw on a lion cub, symbolizing protection. We found this so impactful that Chastity even decided to buy figurines of the lions for her parents.

After we exited the Forbidden City, we found Jingshan Park. Though it used to be a part of the Forbidden City before the 1900s, the park now currently sits separately, immediately North of it. We were able to climb the hill to the very top where we could enjoy a magnificent view of the Forbidden City in its entirety.
The Great Wall of China served as perhaps the most climactic portion of our trip. One of the New 7 Wonders of the World, this is an attraction we’ve all been aware of since childhood, yet here we were with the opportunity to climb its stone and gravel ourselves. It was surreal! During the drive there, we learned that the 13,000 mile expanse was built to protect China from its enemies, the Mongolians and Russians especially. The wall touches down in 10 cities including Gansu, Shanxi, Hebei, Liaoning, Qinghai, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, Tianjin, and of course Beijing. While the part in Beijing has multiple well-known sections, we climbed the Mutianyu section. We all took a chair lift up the mountain to the wall and were able to climb the section in about an hour. The hike up the wall is no joke. We soon realized how much we underestimated the climb as we were panting endlessly the top. It was all worth it once we saw the impeccable view. Afterward, we all reconvened as a group and went to toboggan back down the mountain.
Overall, there is no better way to describe this city to an American than as a mix of Miami and New York City. It’s complete with blue water, traffic, tall and compact buildings, and crazy high housing prices. We expected it to be similar to Shanghai, yet we found there were many things that differentiated it: they use an entirely separate currency, the Hong Kong Dollar, over using the Yuan Renminbi; the people are incredibly diverse, in the context of a Chinese city; the power outlets are European; there’s no firewall blocking Facebook, Twitter, Google, and other western websites; Cantonese is spoken over Mandarin; and plenty more.

As we learned more about Hong Kong’s relationship with Mainland China and how it was originally owned by the British until 1997 when it was returned to China as an independent territory, it seems only reasonable that such stark differences exist.

On our first night, we went to the Victoria Harbour to watch A Symphony of Lights, a light show that the city of Hong Kong plays every night. Regarded as the world’s largest permanent light and sound show, laser lights dance to the rhythm of the music from Hong Kong’s tallest buildings.

Our last full day in Hong Kong was spent on an excursion to Macau, a peninsula located in Southeast Asia. Previously a Portuguese Colony, Macau is a rich in both Chinese and Portuguese culture as seen in its architecture, food, and more. After being transferred to China in 1999, Macau currently operates as an autonomous territory, much like Hong Kong.
While there we visited many attractions. First we saw the Monte Fort, a centuries old stone fort that acts as the historical military center of Macau. There we found cannons, yet they only faced the south and west sides. Because they cannot face China, the north and east sides were removed years ago. Next we saw the ruins of St. Paul’s Cathedral, one of Macau’s most well known landmarks. Built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and burned down in 1835, the cathedral holds a lot of history of both Chinese and Portuguese influence. On the building are carvings of jesuit images like the Virgin Mary stepping on a 7 headed creature. Beneath it is the phrase, “Holy Mother Tramples the Heads of the Dragon” written in Chinese letters. In contrast, we also visited the Temple of A-Ma, a traditional taoist temple. Because residents are free to practice whatever religion they prefer, both are sites of heritage. We also visited Senado Square, and town square and shopping area. As we walked through it, we were offered samples from almost every restaurant down the road. At one bakery, we tried Portuguese egg tarts, a pastry made with egg and sugar.

Macau has also gained a reputation as the “Las Vegas of the East”. Full of high-end luxury hotels and casinos, it is considered the world’s top gambling city. We made a visit to The Venetian Macao, a luxury resort and casino. While unfortunately due to the 21 year old age requirement, Emily and Chastity couldn’t go inside the casino and instead walked around the shopping mall, Emaline enjoyed the slot machines and roulette tables inside and only lost 20 Hong Kong Dollars in the process.
Our first visit was with Strategic Public Relations Group, where we met the chairman and founder, Richard Tsang. We were excited enough to learn that it is the largest public relations network operating in Hong Kong, but it was even more interesting when he explained that typically in most markets, the local companies are the biggest in terms of clients with smaller scale target markets. Yet, for clients with more regional or international target markets, larger international firms are typically the first choice for clients. To combat this, local companies, including SPRG, from various markets around the world collaborate in a partnership called Public Relations Organisation International (PROI) Worldwide. Through this, SPRG and other partner companies are able to offer a wider range of markets and services to larger clients. It also makes the entire network, when viewed as a single company, the second largest PR group in the world. Furthermore, Tsang has recently been appointed the global chairman PROI Worldwide, making him the first Asian to fill the position. Tsang’s pride in his work was extremely infectious. Following the visit we all felt motivated to hopefully make a comparable impact in our future careers.

At Edelman Hong Kong, we met the Head of Corporate Communications, Adrian Warr. One of the first things Warr discussed with us is what sets Edelman apart from other communications firms. We found it interesting that he didn’t utilize awards or prestige of clientele to differentiate the agency. The main thing that sets them apart is their independence. Edelman doesn’t have a large fiscal responsibility to shareholders; there are not as many interests competing with the interest of the client. Therefore, Warr and other specialists in Edelman have more flexibility to satisfy their client. We also had the opportunity to ask him for his best piece of advice. To our surprise, his immediate response was to not pursue advertising. This was initially unsettling to many of us, especially considering that a lot of us are reaching our last few years in the advertising major. He continued to explain that if we move forward with advertising rather than PR, it is best to look for a company that focuses more so on digital advertising over the more traditional firms because of their outdated business model. The industry as a whole is shifting at a rate that traditional firms can’t reasonably adjust their business model to in time. Furthermore, they still have stakeholders to satisfy, and realistically the required changes would result in a loss that they can’t afford, thus the inevitable decline. Smaller, “weird”, or unorthodox firms with no shareholders can make adjustments much more easily. This was a refreshing take on the industry that we hadn’t considered before.
Our last office visit was with the advertising agency, BBDO. There we met Poi Yu, the Corporate Communication Manager. It was refreshing to see a young, energetic woman in a position of power in an agency, especially considering most of the presenters and executives we’ve seen throughout this trip have been men. Their mantra, “The Work, The Work, The Work” perfectly exemplifies their dedication to the quality of their work. Quality, as further defined by Poi, is dependent on the work’s creativity or ability to attract the attention of consumers and its effectiveness in delivering the desired result. Afterward, she showed us a few campaigns and advertisements that BBDO has done for clients in previous years.

Having enjoyed our visit with the Shanghai office, we were ecstatic to visit Burson-Marsteller Hong Kong. We were very delighted to meet with Antoine Calendrier, the Market Leader and Managing Director. Though his time with us was short, it was remarkably impactful. Not only did he share his professional journey with us, he also gave us advice especially emphasizing our need to be clear and ruthless about what exactly we want to do as early as possible. When Chastity asked how to define or clarify these passions we need to be clear about, he suggested that we maximize our exposure to as many different things as possible. In doing so, we can be more certain in identifying what our passions are. Ultimately, his words resonated with all of us and we’re certain they will be valuable as we shift from University students to young professionals. Following Calendrier’s departure, we also met Associate Director Susie Li and Senior Associate Polka Yu who introduced us to the work Burson-Marsteller has done for their clients.
Dinner at Pop Restaurant
Located at “3 on the Bund”, the restaurant itself was beautiful enough, but the rooftop had an amazing view of Shanghai overlooking the Huang Pu River. Though the restaurant sold American food, it still clearly had an eccentric twist with small changes that caught me by surprise such as popcorn on top of the chocolate cake and anchovies in the salad.

DinTaiFung
which we were told had some of the best soup dumplings in the world. And yet of course they were right. The chicken, pork, and shrimp flavors were all good but the crab was amazing.

DolarShop
For our Shanghai farewell dinner, we went to Dolar Shop to enjoy what was for many of us our first hot pot dinner. Though Emily has had a melting pot dinner which is similar, none of us were exactly prepared for the clumsy, yet delicious experience. We were each given our own pots of broth boiling over a flame along with a huge selection of raw meats, vegetables, and noodles to cook in the pots. Overall our meal was very good and we managed to finish without burning or poisoning ourselves.
Peking Duck
As soon as we arrived in Beijing, we immediately headed to [restaurant] to try the world renowned peking duck. Chastity, for one, had never had duck itself, much less peking duck but we were all eager to try it nonetheless. Once the chef brought it to the table, he cut it in front of us into servable pieces. When eating, we were instructed to place it onto a pancake, much like an enchilada, along with our choice of pineapple, cucumber, sauce, and other items. It was delicious!

The Night Street Food Market
Around the corner from our hotel in Beijing, we walked to a night market. There along about a mile of the street were dozens of vendors selling various food items, from sticks of pineapple and melons to whole crabs and roasted chickens. Yet what we found really bizarre were the scorpions, snakes, jelly fish all served on sticks. Emily felt adventurous and decided to try the scorpion which she claimed tasted like fried shrimp. She also tried the stinky tofu whose potent smell we had noticed multiple times.

Birthday Noodles
In Hong Kong we celebrated a birthday. Of course in Chinese fashion, we had dinner at Crystal Jade. There we all had a bowl of noodles which is a customary way to celebrate birthdays in China. The long noodles symbolize longevity. By eating them, you wishing longevity to the birthday person’s life.
BE SAFE. IT’S DANGEROUS OVER THERE!”

Many people that haven’t been to China before are often fearful due to the language barrier, stories of scammers, and general stereotypes. Yet, considering the large amount of surveillance in China, street crime and violence is rare, especially when compared to other countries like the United States. Its so safe, that one could walk alone in the middle of the night without an issue, though we don’t recommend that nonetheless.

“EVERYTHING’S SO... SMALL THERE”

Due to the perception that Chinese people are short, this was a concern many of us heard before arriving in China. Yet, Chinese people are not necessarily extremely short. Yes they may be around 3 inches shorter than an American on average, but not to the extreme that many believe. We all slept comfortably without our feet extending the edges of our beds and entered rooms without hitting our foreheads on the doorway. Yet the only thing that may have merit is the presence of squat toilets: a toilet situated as a hole in the floor, rather than a porcelain chair. They come complete with toilet paper and a flush button, yet it was a strange bathroom feature to get used to.

“I CAN’T STAND CHINESE PEOPLE! THEY’RE SO RUDE AND PUSHY”

Due to a culture of hyper competition in China, there is general attitude among its people that they will miss out on their spot if they don’t hurry and take it for themselves. Of course there is a huge population and limited resources, so it only makes sense that the sentiment exists. Yet, not all Chinese people are this way. Throughout this trip, we’ve met plenty of people who have been nothing but kind to us including Yiwei, Yue, Merry, and more. A fast paced, competitive lifestyle isn’t indicative of someone’s personal values and likeability.
Emaline Carter
I am a graduate student in the Grady college of Journalism and Mass Communications; obtaining my M.A. in Mass Communications with a concentration in PR. I am full of wanderlust and having the opportunity to travel to China was life-changing and inspiring. I’ve enjoyed gaining valuable industry knowledge at the same time while experiences the different cultures of Asia.

Emily Gimbert
I’m currently in my third year at the University of Georgia studying Advertising & Public Relations with a concentration in Fashion Merchandising. This trip has enlarged my view of the world and impacted my understanding of my own life with the different cultures that I’ve emerged myself in these past 3 weeks.

Chastity Van Dyke
I’m a rising 4th year studying Advertising, Marketing, and International Business at the University of Georgia. Due to the fact that I’ve never been outside of the United States before, I have always made it a goal of mine to study abroad during my collegiate experience. Yet, by choosing China, I’ve been able to get a perspective of a culture entirely different than my own. I’ve challenged myself to get outside of my comfort zone and learn new things and I believe that this is only the beginning of my personal growth period.

Photos by: Emily Carter, Emily Gimbert, Juan Meng
6 plane rides, 3 cities, and 1 unforgettable adventure. Here in this newsletter you will get to follow along on the cultural and professional experiences that we were able to have all because we made the best choice of our lives and chose China.

Airdropping pictures is a tool on the iPhone. It has been the lifeblood of us sharing pictures and memories on our trip. We airdropped in China and were airdropped into China ourselves.

Team Members

Waynie Lee
Reed Smith
Erica Williams

2016
Erica Williams is a 2016 graduate, majoring in marketing and real estate from Atlanta, GA. This is her first time traveling outside of the U.S. She likes jet skiing, going to the nail salon/spa, watching movies, and playing with her puppy Bentley.

**Fun Fact:** She plans to take over her family’s real estate business after graduation.

Reed Smith is a rising junior studying advertising and marketing from Atlanta, GA. He enjoys basketball, lacrosse, fishing, drawing, and spending time with friends. He hopes to eventually end up in Hawaii.

**Fun Fact:** He has 90 degree angle hitchhiker thumbs.

Waynie Lee is a rising junior studying advertising, business management, and international business from Suwanee, GA. She loves anything related to fitness, good food, and listening to music. She has been to China a few times to visit family, but never really as a tourist.

**Fun Fact:** She has gone skydiving twice and is terrified of birds.
Shanghai Splendor

Hearst Agency Visit

To kick off our agency visits we were able to visit Hearst International Publishing. Hearst is one of the largest media companies in the world, owning many household names such as ELLE, Esquire, and Cosmopolitan. Beyond that, they have many other divisions including a venture capitalist branch. We were lucky enough to have Hugues de Vautibault, the deputy of GM of Hearst China present to us. He gave us a quick overview of Hearst as a media company and of the social media landscape in China. We were then lucky enough to be able to have a panel of new employees sit down and talk to us. They were able to give us a first-hand glimpse into the lives of new graduates in the industry and their first-hand experience. All of us pretty much grilled them with questions because this was an opportunity we’d never be able to have again. From the rapidly changing technology to crazy work hours, it only made us want to get into the industry even more. Our time at Hearst was very beneficial. We got to learn about what the company does from one of their top executives while also having our questions answered about what it’s like to work day-to-day in the company’s various divisions.

OgilvyOne Visit

Ogilvy & Mather is one of those agencies you read about in your textbooks, the legendary ones. Our visit to Ogilvy, without a doubt, lived up to those expectations. When we arrived we got a tour of the office and it blew us away. You could feel the creativity in the office just based on how the office was laid out. Already in awe from the multi-storied office tour, we were greeted by division President, Jacco de Schegget. He is a charming and wildly impressive man we all instantly admired. We were hanging on to his every word in the 2-hour presentation. Jacco explained to us a little bit about what OgilvyOne does in China and what makes them special as a company, and trust us it was a lot. He then gave us an overview of the macroeconomics of China and its social trends. Jacco did an amazing job of making the information he presented to us relatable from a foreigner’s perspective. The knowledge we walked out with from his presentation was so much better than anything we could’ve gotten in a classroom. His expertise in the industry was incredible and the insights he gave us about advertising and China in general are invaluable. We all left the office very inspired and motivated. It’s times like these that reassure us that we picked the right industry to go into.
Burson-Marsteller Visit

Burson-Marsteller is located in the same WPP building as the Ogilvy office. We met one of the company’s consultants, Cody, in the lobby and he took us up to their office. The Burson-Marsteller workplace, he explained, was designed with a mix of creative and traditional office characteristics. We sat down in their presentation room and he discussed Burson-Marsteller’s background and what they do.

Burson-Marsteller is a global public relations and communications company. Some sectors of the business work directly with the government and engage in crisis communication. The company focuses on corporate reputation and consumer/brand marketing. Waynie will actually be interning there for two months in their brand marketing department after this trip ends. They also develop some games to promote their customer’s brands using HTML 5. Overall, the visit we had with Burson-Marsteller was a good one, and it was our first exposure to a company that focuses heavily on public relations on our trip thus far. It was clear they did great work and we were lucky to learn a bit more about it.

PHD Media Visit

After visiting Ogilvy, we had the opportunity to go visit the media agency PHD. We walked into a very modern office then straight into the conference room where we were greeted by Kindy and bowls of snacks all perched on top of a long table made completely of legos. She knew the way to our hearts. Here we learned about what PHD does and how the smaller firm fits into the communications chain. Kindy also gave us an overview of the macroeconomics of China and how their social media systems worked. She made it a point to emphasis out how China plans to redefine what “Made in China” means to the world as the country plans to increase quality and decrease on quantity. Being a smaller firm it was interesting to find out a little bit more about how a more boutique firm operates in connection with larger agencies that they share clients with. Kindy answered all of our questions regarding the industry and really helped us even further understand the media world.

LKK Design Visit

Our visit to LKK was a rather new experience compared to the other agencies we had been to thus far. Upon entering, we were met by the smiles of a handful of young LKK employees and Yan Zhang, the director of the company. We received a tour of their office, and it quickly became clear to us that LKK is founded on ideas of creativity and innovation.

Next, we sat down for the actual LKK brief. We were led through the presentation and company videos to give us an idea of what LKK does. Alongside engineering and creating actual inventions, LKK works as a consulting company. Essentially, LKK specialized in anything involving creativity and innovative thinking. They recently helped a cultural arts center redesign their business structure in order to lure in more customers and promote interest in some of China’s dying arts. Now, they have been tasked with doing the same type of consulting for one of China’s oldest tea shops. They gave us the brief, and had us do actual, hands-on creative work to see what solutions we could come up with. All in all, our experience at LKK was a fantastic one, and it was nice to get a chance to get involved and try out some of the work that these companies do day to day.
Wuzhen Water Town

Wuzhen is located within a triangle that lies between Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou. The town is south of the Yangtze River and is built on a water canal. Therefore, the residents’ main form of transportation is by boat. The town is often referred to as the Venice of the East. There are 5 other water towns in the area, but most of them have been taken over by tourism. Wuzhen is the most untouched of the water towns.

Wuzhen was extremely beautiful. We visited the east part of the river first. The East part is still inhabited by native families. When we first came into the town we saw a native woman washing her vegetables on the side of the canal. In another home an elderly man was cooking himself lunch. The town was nearly packed to capacity with tourists, and the native families continued to carry out their daily activities. There were so many people we were pretty much shuffling the whole time.

After visiting the east side of the river, we ventured to the west side. The west side is more modern, and is not inhabited by families. It was also less packed with tourists! We loved seeing the men in rice hats paddle ferries across the canals. We came across a side of the canal that was full of small dog sized koi fish. There were beautiful buildings and shops to see. Despite the dreary weather the trip out to Wuzhen was a big hit.

What’s On The Menu?

Hot Pot Dinner

Shanghai was full of delicious and exotic foods but the farewell hotpot dinner took the cake. Imagine an Asian version of fondue except healthier and more delicious. Each person got their own simmering hotpot full of delicious broth to cook their chosen ingredients in. On the table was a variety of delicious meats, vegetables and noodles. Everyone chose what they wanted, dipped it into the steaming bowl of goodness, and a little while later your once uncooked ingredients were ready to eat. Eating hotpot is an activity in itself, and a must try when one comes to China.

Tianzifang Art District

Tianzifang is an art district in Shanghai located in the Old French Quarter. The area consisted of alley ways and streets, with unique and creative stores. The layout was like a maze, and each alley-way presented a new artistic flavor. Our group thoroughly enjoyed exploring the clothing and small trinket stores. The various souvenir shops that sold small Buddha statues, Shanghai fridge magnets, and authentic Chinese hand creams were also incredible. Tianzifang reminded us of the Little Five Points area in Atlanta. The area was eclectic and encouraged artistic expression. One artist actually sat outside and made a masterpiece by cutting small pieces of paper into tiny designs. We all got these amazingly designed souvenir t-shirts that looked like street art. Dr. Meng’s suggestion to explore Tianzifang was a great one.
At the Temple of Heaven, we got to play emperor for a day as this is where emperors would come to pray to the heavens for good harvests. The historic area consists of three locations: The Circular Mound, Imperial Vault of Heaven, and the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests. The intricacy at which all of the temples were built was mind blowing. In fact, some of the buildings are made completely out of wood. That’s correct- not a single nail. On the way out we were invited to a game of jianzi, the Chinese version of hacky sack, by some locals. We put on quite the show to say the least.

Let's just say none of us will be kicking around a jianzi anytime soon.

When you come to Beijing there is a list of must do’s, and visiting Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City is on the top of that list. Visiting here gave us a small glimpse into what life in the dynasties was like. What you will notice right away is just the sheer size of both the square and especially the palace. The beautiful government buildings surrounding the Square just shows how much of a presence the government has in the country.

Once inside the palace we went from building to building listening to our wonderful tour guide, Merry, talk. The real treat was when we climbed to the top of Jing Shan Park and got to see this amazing view. It was picture perfect.

The motto of this picture is “No pee, no tea.” We got the impromptu chance to go to a tea ceremony. Here we were able to sample five different kinds of delicious teas and watch the tea maker prepare them in the way they were truly meant to be prepared. If anything has come from this trip, it is that we have all been converted into tea drinkers. Perhaps our favorite part was when the tea maker brought out the pee pee boy. The Chinese have many amazing things used for the enjoyment of this age old tradition, like color changing cups and clay figurines. This pee pee boy is used to test if the water is ready. If the water is just right then the little figurine will “pee” - if not than no tea. If anyone is looking to collect tea we would recommend Puer. For those who spend too much time in front of a screen, we suggest a little jasmine tea.
Beijing Cuisine

What’s On The Menu?

Peking Duck Dinner

Despite only staying a few days in Beijing, it is safe to the food there was amazing. Every meal was so delicious that it was silent for the most part as everyone was so busy eating. The highlight of our stay in Beijing though was definitely the Peking duck dinner. Beijing is famous for it’s delicious duck that is specially prepared from the way the duck is fed to the preparation of the meat that takes a two days. The combination of the perfectly crispy skin, various sauces, and other small ingredients all wrapped up in a translucent thin pancake is to die for.

Lazy Susans

What is round, spins, and loved by all? We’ve all come to love this handy food dispenser. Now we can’t imagine eating without one. It just speeds up the process so much. However, you have to be careful not to lose a hand in the feeding frenzy!
Homage to Hong Kong

**SPRG Visit**

Strategic Public Relations Group is the biggest local PR firm in Hong Kong. However, we learned that within the Public Relations Organizations International (PROI), the company is the second largest firm. Richard, the CEO, told us that he was the first Asian Global Chairman of PROI in 46 years. To get to this position he worked double shifts for 3 years, and didn’t get off until midnight every night...definitely someone to look up to. He told us that after working with Edelman he decided to set up his own PR group because he wanted to own the biggest PR firm in the world. Most of his staff have been there since he first opened his doors. To top it all off, SPRG does an amazing amount of charity work. Richard was an impressive man, that built an even more impressive company.

**Burson-Marsteller Visit**

At Burson-Marsteller we met Antoine Calendrier, the firm’s Market Leader. He taught us that public relations is all about creating an investable story. Any company can create a great product or service, but no one is going to invest in it if they don’t believe in it. The best piece of advice he gave us, was to find our passion and follow it fiercely while trusting in our gut. In the short time he talked to us, he inspired us all to fearlessly go after what we want.

Since Antoine had to run, Susie followed up with an in depth case study of one of Burson’s biggest clients. It was cool to see the real work they had done for this tech giant. Next we met Polka, who is a Senior Director within the company, perhaps one of the coolest people we’ve met so far. She showed us how to make a “message house”. This is used to communicate to clients how our organization is better than the others, and drive this fact into their heads through the use of strong, factual points. To be a great public relations firm you must first understand the market’s current perception of your client, and then determine what the client wants the market’s future perception of themselves to be. We learned that it is very important to outline how communication will support the business objective. If improved PR and communication won’t support the client’s business objective, then your work is futile. Polka’s most important advice though was telling us that as PR professionals we need to be reliable and detail oriented. This is definitely one of our favorite agency visits. We loved Burson-Marsteller Hong Kong!
Edelman Public Relations Worldwide Visit

Following our string of amazing visits, we went to Edelman. Here we met Adrian Warr who is the Senior Director. He informed us that Edelman is an independent and unleveraged agency. Independence affords them a lot more freedom to change and grow, that some other agency structures won’t allow. This includes fiscal benefits, cultural benefits and a unique organizational design. At Edelman they love pro bono and do a lot of work for charitable organizations. In his short time with us, he gave us a lot of amazing advice. The most memorable thing he said was that he straight up thought that advertising was a dying industry. Crazy right? What he said about the lagging structure of agencies will soon be outperformed by lean structured PR firms. Everything he said made perfect sense and had us all rethinking a few things.

After Adrian left we had a series of speakers come in and present case studies to us, which was a real treat. Amongst them were cases on a luxurious hotel that was set to open in Macau, a coffee company, and a research project called the Trust Barometer. Trust plays a big part in the business world and their project provides vital knowledge that helps companies worldwide. They do tons of research to understand consumer perceptions. In Hong Kong, traditional advertising and search engines are the most trusted form of media. Consumers also believe that peer experts are more credible than leaders. The visit to Edelman really had us all fired up again about what we hope to do one day.

BBDO Visit

Wrapping up our agency visits for the whole trip, we visited BBDO. BBDO is a world-class advertising agency with offices around the globe. Poi, a manager in the agency, was our presenter. She opened up the talk with some facts about BBDO itself, named after the last names of the four founders. Super cool facts: the term brainstorming was actually invented inside BBDO by Mr. Osborne, BBDO was involved in the incident that caught Michael Jackson’s hair on fire which was rumored to have started his plastic surgery obsession, and the sitcom Mad Men is actually based off BBDO back in the day. Pretty cool right? We loved their motto which is “the work. the work. the work.”, simple and to the point. Poi then treated us to some of BBDO’s work. There were some pretty amazing pieces of work, both funny and creative. It’s seeing things like this that give us all assurance that we picked the right field to go into. Then came the most interesting part of the presentation, an overview of China culture. Her talk really hit points that the other agencies didn’t. We talked honestly about what we’d seen so far on our trip and it was one of the most educational discussions thus far. BBDO, and the ever so engaging Poi, was the perfect way to close up our agency visits.
That’s interesting...
When we were leaving Macau, something caught our eye in a convenience store. There was a wall of cigarettes for sale, all of which had aggressive, scare-tactic advertising as part of their display. Apparently, it is required by law here to place these images next to cigarettes. Due to our advertising studies, we found this to be interesting. Cigarette companies here actually have to deal with advertisements that directly oppose their products when attempting to make a sale.

Day trip to Macau
On our last official day of the trip we spent the day in Macau. It was an early morning to catch the hour long boat ride to Macau. Excitement filled all of us as we were determined to make this last day a good one, but the heat and humidity really tested us. Our tour guide was incredibly knowledgeable and was telling us some very interesting facts. Having been colonized by the Portuguese, Macau has an interesting mix of cultures. Some say it is a place without an identity of their own actually. The architecture was very close to that of the streets of Cuba. We first visited the oldest Portuguese fortress and learned a little about why they built it. Then we walked the streets in front of the ruins of St. Paul’s church. It was interesting to see the clash of cultures etched onto the walls of the church. On the streets we sampled all the local food, including their specialty pork and beef jerky, almond cookies, and egg tarts. Lunch was at a small Portuguese place with delicious food and afterwards was the temple. Last on our trip was the Venetian hotel, inside of which had a huge casino and lots of shopping. It was like they took streets straight out of Venice and plopped them into the hotel, complete with fake blue skies. Some gambled and some shopped, Macau treated us well.

What’s On The Menu?
Dim Sum Dinner
Dim sum holds a special place in all those who live in Hong Kong. It is a lifestyle, a past-time, and is quintessentially Hong Kong. Our exquisite lunch of dim sum on the 30th floor in Nanhai No. 1 was a dining experience like no other. With the picture perfect view of the Victoria Harbor combined with the delicious food in steaming baskets it was nothing short of a culinary voyage. Our table was filled with steaming BBQ pork buns, succulent shrimp dumplings, and savory stir fried beef noodles. Testing everyone’s chopstick skills, the dim sum were snatched up within minutes of them being set down. The meal was filled with sounds of delight. Dim sum was definitely a memorable meal. We discussed out quest to find good dim sum places back home. Let the quest begin.
A Farewell to China

Reed Smith

These three weeks have been some of the most beneficial and influential of my life. It seems that for as long as I can remember, I have excelled at living within my comfort zone. When I signed up to go abroad to China, it had not yet hit me how much of an adventurous leap this would be. Yet, as the departure date approached, I grew nervous. It became fully clear the seeming insanity that this trip was about to be- I was about to travel halfway across the world, immerse myself in a culture polar to my own, and visit some of the world’s most elite agencies. And now, after taking this leap, I realize that it could not have paid off more. This trip came to me at a low point in my life, and has lifted me up with inspiration and provided the motivation I need to push forward, harder than ever before. I feel that I have now seen the world, and I am sure that with the correct focus and effort, I can excel in it.

Having been to China many times before I wasn’t sure there was much more for me to see, but I am so happy to admit that I was dead wrong. These 3 weeks have been the best weeks of my life. I basically have gotten to re-experience China again but this time as a tourist, and with the most amazing group of people I could’ve asked for. The bonds we’ve formed learning, laughing, and growing as people has left me with some amazing friendships. I’ve gotten to talk to people I never could’ve dreamed would even give me the time of day, and learn so much about the industry I love. The cultural excursions and food exceeded every expectation I ever could’ve had. My 2nd trip to the Great Wall, complete with ski lifts and toboggans, will forever be my favorite memory. This trip honestly has changed my life and has left me with memories I’ll cherish forever. This trip has given me assurance that I chose the right field to go into and the fuel I need to chase my dreams passionately. Given the choice of other study abroad programs, I would choose China every time.

Waynie Lee

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Erica Williams

Four years ago, I never would have imagined that I would be in this place right now. As a first generation college student, I had to research, learn and explore all that college had to offer on my own. It wasn’t until fall semester of my fourth year that I decide to explore studying abroad, and learned that there were numerous scholarships and grants available to fund my excursion. Fast forward to the summer, and here I am, in China! It is my very first time traveling outside of the United States. One small step towards learning more about the world, and one huge step outside of my comfort zone. Nonetheless, this entire trip has been astonishing. China has shown me how remarkable history is, as well as how incredible progress is. I feel so incredibly rewarded to have had the opportunity to visit the Great Wall, the Forbidden city, the Temple of Heaven, Wuzhen, Macau and many other amazing destinations in China. Furthermore, our various agency visits have enlightened me about the wonderful and promising future of advertising and public relations, and I cannot wait to join the industry. Thank you so much China, for accepting me with open arms. These past three weeks are forever engrained into my heart.