FIT-NCSU-Donghua Study Abroad Program: Shanghai, China

By Jacki Ramdin

When most people think about studying abroad, China does not typically come to mind. For Fashion and Textile majors however, China is one of the best places to learn firsthand about the industry. For me, studying abroad was something that made me nervous, I’ve never traveled too far from home and the whole process seemed daunting. But, after seeing a presentation on the program with Donghua Fashion Institute and FIT, I knew China was where I needed to go.

As a Fashion Development and Product Management major, traveling to China made a lot of sense because the majority of fashion products that are sold in the United States are made in China. Not only was able to take several classes that dealt with the global fashion industry, but I was able to take them with students from NC State, Donghua University, and Fashion Institute of Technology, enabling me to make connections and friendships with students from around the world. Our courses included Product Development, Global Merchandising, Global Marketing, Cross Cultural Studies, and Mandarin.

With the Product Development class, I was able to visit an apparel factory and witness what manufacturing looks like in some Chinese factories. I noticed that the factory used a lot of the same equipment that we have access to here in the College of textiles including their industrial sewing machines, Gerber software and Lectra Vector cutting systems.
Cross Cultural studies was a class designed to compare American Culture to Chinese Culture. In this class we had discussions with the Chinese students about traditional customs and traditions in China vs. America and talked about the importance of understanding cultural differences as they pertain to doing business internationally. We also got to try several tasty treats that our teacher made for us.

In Shanghai, traveling to surrounding cities was fairly simple and easy. We had the option of taking the metro, public buses or the train anywhere we wanted to go. One day, a few of us decided to take a day trip to the Ancient town of Zhujiajiao, a town located in the Qingpu District of Shanghai. Here we sampled local foods, took a short boat ride, and shopped along the water streets.
We also took a weekend trip to Beijing with the students from FIT. In Beijing, we visited a Jade museum, Summer Palace, Forbidden City, the location of the 2008 Summer Olympics and the Great Wall of China.

China will forever hold a special place in my heart. The experience of studying in the incredible city of Shanghai is something that I will never forget, and I will always cherish the memories and friendships that were made there. *The DHU, NCSU, FIT program in Shanghai has greatly enhanced my educational experience here at NC State and I am extremely happy that I decided to push myself out of my comfort zone and try something new and unknown.*