

Dominique Hetrick

Study Abroad Report

Peru- Summer 2016

I owe a colossal thank you to the Department of Languages and Cultures for providing the funds for the Study Abroad Award and the Scholarships and Awards Committee for selecting me as a recipient. This award was essential in providing me with the opportunity to study abroad in Cusco, Peru. While in this historic city, I was able to stay with an incredible host family who challenged my Spanish speaking skills and taught me about the culture of Cusco and the surrounding areas. I also engaged with that culture while participating in excursions to Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley, and Puno and Lake Titicaca. Learning and experiencing this culture added to my global perspective by enhancing my philosophy of acceptance and understanding of everyone who lives on this planet.

In addition to personal growth on this trip, I enriched my academic growth by improving my Spanish speaking skills and leaping out of my comfort zone by taking a class in Hispanic literature. This class added to my Spanish vocabulary and challenged my way of thinking by enabling me to search for a deeper meaning in the words written by famous Hispanic writers. I also took a class in the culture of Spanish speaking countries and learned various aspects of those cultures through media, music, and personal research. The final project for that class was to explore the relationship between how citizens perceived their country versus the actual state of the country. I researched Columbia and focused on what problems were viewed as the most important in the years 2004 and 2015 and analyzed the changes. The professor selected my paper to be published through ISA as an example of previous work in the program.

All of these experiences both cultural and academic would not have been possible without the generous Study Abroad Award.