

Undergraduate Language Grant Recipients

Three Asian Languages and Cultures students were recently named recipients of Northwestern's Undergraduate Language Grant (ULG), which provides monetary assistance to study an Asian language intensively over the summer. The ULG is geared towards students who have academic or professional goals for which language study is important. Awardees are able to spend a summer honing their language skills.

Kelsey Allen-Niesen (2019) is an ALC major in Chinese, with a minor in Art History. She will be studying in Beijing, China with Princeton in Beijing. Agneska Bloch (2019), double major in ALC (Hindi-Urdu) and Philosophy will study Hindi in Jaipur, India with the American Institute of Indian Studies. Ruogu Xu (2018), double ALC (Japanese) and Psychology major with a minor in Computer Science, will study at Hakodate, Japan with the Hokkaido International Foundation.

The opportunity to spend a summer learning a language means something different for everyone. For some, it provides the opportunity to give context to their learning. Allen-Niesen explains, "there's only so much I can learn from books and lectures. By living in China and studying Chinese, my ALC Major becomes that much more complex and multi-dimensional." She will be able to use her experiences to critically analyze the information presented in the classroom and give insight both inside and outside the classroom. For others, it helps to advance their academic and professional prospects. Xu says that this grant will prepare him for his academic and professional endeavors by preparing him for the Japanese classes at Northwestern and increasing his job opportunities. Bloch believes that this grant will give her an opportunity to explore her interest in an academic and leisurely sense. She plans on "[writing] an interdisciplinary thesis in ALC and Philosophy and [wants] to be able to read primary source material in Hindi as a part of [her] research" and for fun.

All three are looking forward to more than learning the language though. This is an opportunity to explore a new culture and meet new people. Allen-Niesen hopes to experience nightlife in China through the Night Market scene. In addition, she plans on visiting art galleries while she's there. Xu is most excited for Japanese food. He has been to Japan once and misses the delicacies he had while he was there. Bloch will be living with a host family, which will surely provide insight into the daily lives of people in India.

While all three vary in their goals and interests, they are all bonded by their desire to learn a new Asian language and make a difference. Congratulations to each one, and here's to a great summer!

By Kathy Tian