

## **My semester abroad in Shanghai**

As a 4<sup>th</sup> year student of the Mr. Drs.-student I went on an exchange to China. During the fall semester of 2016, I studied at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics for my study in Economics and Business Economics. It was an amazing experience, about which I would like to tell you!

It all started with a practical preparation. When you go to China there are some things you have to think about. Most important is the visa. You can apply for this Visa at the application center in The Hague, or arrange a visa by an application service. I have got mine from the application center in The Hague, I made an arrangement in advance and five days after bringing all the documents in, I could pick up my passport with my visa in The Hague again. Besides of the visa it's recommended to check with the GGD about your vaccinations. Also, it is useful to have a credit card. In China, you can't pay with your Dutch debit card. But most Chinese stores and restaurants don't accept cards at all and so you have to pay in cash. It is possible to get cash from an ATM with your Dutch debit card. I would also recommend to buy a VPN connection in advance, because without a VPN you cannot use websites as Google, Facebook, Instagram, etc.

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, I arrived in Shanghai. It was all a bit chaotic and it took me a lot of time to get through the customs, get my baggage and find a legal cab. I had booked a hostel for my first days in Shanghai, so I should have some time to find myself a room. I chose not to live on campus, because the university is a bit far away from the city center and I preferred to live in the center of Shanghai.

During my first days in the hostel I bought a Chinese telephone card, a public transport card and some more basic things. The people from the hostel were very helpful. I have spent the days with exploring the city and looking for rooms. It was not really easy to find a room, since a lot of people are arriving at the same time in Shanghai. After three days, I found a room in a shared apartment with 4 other students in a building with many other international students, which was really nice.

During those first days I also met my buddy. SUFE connects every international student with a Chinese student from SUFE. I was very lucky, my buddy was very nice. She was a bit shy but gave me a lot of information and tips about Shanghai and SUFE. She was very helpful to me and so we have met some more times during the semester.

The next day, university started with an introduction day. On this first day I went to the university with another girl from Rotterdam, it was a bit hard to find how to get there by public transport, so we arrived a bit late. The day started with all international students and students from other universities in China standing on the sports court and there were some talks from teachers and head officers. Afterwards they told us some general things about the semester, exams and activities.

At SUFE you have to subscribe yourself for courses online. I missed a message about this subscription, which you could already do from June on. After all, it was no problem and I could choose my courses. I had decided to stay only until Christmas, which limited me in choosing my courses. Most courses are 16 week courses, which will end mid January, so I choose only some 12 week courses.

I'm doing the Mr.Drs.-program, which made the obligation for me to get only 12 ECTS. I will incorporate all the courses as electives, since I have already done a minor and also some electives. I had chosen the following courses:

**Management:** *As China's growth continues, many companies from around the world will make strategic decisions to locate bases in China; representing the world's largest market for products and services and potentially the world's largest economy. Foreign companies that will operate in China will have experience of management at an international level and ability to compete in the growing economy. Those who will work in Chinese companies, and those entering foreign companies based in China, will need to be aware of management trends, culture and benefits of both management environments.*

*This course is designed to examine universal fundamental management principles, styles and methodology and how they practiced. Managers today require global skills, cause manager today are global managers.*

This course wasn't really hard for me, but it was nice to hear about the differences in management between Western countries and Asian countries. The course was given by a British teacher. The examination consisted of some group assignments with presentations and a final individual essay in the end. The course was very popular by international students.

**Financial accounting:** *Accounting is business language. Financial accounting information is a reflection of firm economic activities and consequences, and an important information channel for all the stakeholders. Interpreting financial accounting information is necessary for managers. This course is about accounting theory and practice in US. It helps students to get the knowledge on how to make and analyze financial reports. In this course, we will conduct seminars, class discussions and case studies.*

The course gave a basic view about accounting. It was a bit harder than the first year course Financial Accounting at Erasmus, but easier than the Intermediate Accounting course. The course wasn't really hard to me, since I have already done my major in Accountancy at Erasmus, but it was still nice to learn about Accountancy in the American system. We had to hand in our homework sometimes, which was 30% of your grade. The other 70% was a final exam at the end of the period.

**Intermediate Macroeconomics:** *The primary goal of this course is to help you develop a consistent way of thinking about some key macroeconomic phenomena. We will shed light on some macroeconomic questions. However, do not expect a simple answer to any of this questions, there is no simple answer! Rather, what you should aim for is to develop a framework for studying these questions, along with some empirical guidance. We will review some of the key lessons research in macroeconomics has reached over the years, lessons that will help you understand why certain policy questions remain the topic of hot debate in both academic and the political arena.*

This course was really similar to the Macro-economic course in the first year of the Bachelor. The grade of this subject is based on your attendance, some quizzes during class, 3 assignments you have to hand in during the period, a midterm exam and a final exam at the end of the period. There were a lot of things to do for this course, but that makes sure that you don't have to do everything in once at the end of the period.

**Contract Law:** *The law of contracts is one of the foundational building blocks of the common law. The general principle is that people should be permitted to pursue their own interests in negotiation with other people pursuing their own interests, and that the end result of the negotiation should be certain, clear, and enforceable by each party. This is the goal the law of contracts attempts to achieve. We divide the common law into courses like contracts, torts, property, and procedure for ease of instruction. But be very careful. The boundaries are far from clear, and sometimes, you will see a tort case look very much like a contract case, and vice versa. Property is exchanged through contract so there are many places where the two bodies of law intersect, meet, and sometimes clash. And procedure often decides the results of a case.*

This course was the only non-economic course I chose. The course was very nice, since the American teacher was very enthusiastic and we have discussed a lot of cases, which made it really practical. The course was really hard, even since I have almost finished my bachelor in Law. It was a bit hard to understand the law system, since it is not similar to our own Dutch system. The final exam was an essay, in which you had to discuss a case yourself. I have really enjoyed this course, but there was a lot to read and it was the hardest course to me. For people who are not really interested in Law, I wouldn't recommend this course.

Shanghai is not a very expensive city, but of course you can make it as expensive as you want yourself. On average, living in Shanghai was for me a little bit more expensive than living in Rotterdam. Rooms and apartments are more expensive than in Rotterdam, but when you chose to live on campus it is even cheaper. Cost on daily foods depends on your taste. If you like to eat Chinese food or street food, it is really cheap. If you want to eat more western food, you have to pay a bit more. Doing grocery shopping is often more expensive than going out for diner or ordering food, so it is not really usual to cook your own food. Overall, my monthly costs were around 500 euro for rent, 20 euro for public transport, 250 euro on food and drinks, a membership at the gym for 30 euro and around 10 euro for phone costs.

The visa was about 100 euro, the vaccinations were paid by my insurance. I bought my plane ticket with Flying Blue miles.

During my exchange I have travelled a lot, which made the exchange more expensive. Transport in China is not very expensive and it is more than fine to stay in hostels. Most of my trips were to Chinese cities, which you could reach by train. This train is really cheap, but the high speed train to Beijing was a bit more expensive about 150 euros for a roundtrip. I did also some trips by plane, I went to Guilin (120 euro) and to Kuala Lumpur (200 euro). After all, I think I have spent around 1000 euro on travelling, but it was totally worth it!

Daily life in Shanghai is in some perspective really different from the life here in Rotterdam. Shanghai is a big city, there is always something to do and there are a lot of international people. The Chinese people were very shy, you didn't really get in contact with them easily, also not at the university. The campus was big, but old. The class rooms were very different from the rooms at Erasmus and even the students were very different. They have a lot of unusual habitats, they were burping and sleeping a lot in class, and they don't speak English very well. Since I chose to live in the city center it took me more than an hour to get to the university, but I should do it again.

Shanghai is an amazing city, with so many things to do and to see. Also the night life is really nice, there are a lot of clubs and every evening you can go somewhere. An extra advantage

for girls are the ladies nights, you will get free entrance and free drinks. There are a lot of bars and clubs to explore, more than weekends ;).

After all, I should really recommend an exchange to SUFE. The university and the courses were not that challenging, but it also gave me the ability to do a lot of other things and to travel.

My exchange was one of the most amazing and expiring adventures in my life. I made new friends, get in touch with a totally different culture and I have made so many nice trips. So I should say, take this change, because I'm sure that you won't regret it!

If you have any questions about my exchange at SUFE, feel free to contact me 😊

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