

Individual Study Plan

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Community Environment and Planning 13'

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Letter of Introduction

This individual study plan (ISP) is the planning document for my undergraduate program, Community Environment and Planning (CEP). It describes my educational path and goals for two years with CEP, recording my aspiration, endeavor, and accomplishments. It contains four major sections: description for courses I took in two years, internship experiences, study abroad experiences, and plan for senior project topic. This ISP is first created in fall of 2011 when I entered CEP and was revised constantly over the time.

Before going to Kanas in Xinjiang province in summer of 2011, my educational goal was to strive for both history and environment protection in China through urban planning and design. The first incentive for this plan was derived as early as when I was 12 after experiencing a completely disordered development of my hometown Jingzhou, a small city that used to be famous for its good historic preservation. But the trip to Xinjiang made me realize that only protect the visible things is not enough. Local residents came to the national park, giving up their livestock and nomadic life, and starting the commercial business with visitor like offering horse riding and house visiting. Although there was great planning and strict environment protecting policy, under the cover of environment preservation the local culture and tradition are still slowly disappearing, irreversibly and eternally. Preservation should not only include physical form, but also the invisible identity and living style. Only with nomads can the grassland stay alive and authentic. From this experience, I started to be very interested in the roles of public education and community engagement could play in planning and preservation. Together with skills of urban planning and policy-making, I want to increase public awareness of history and environment protection and drive people to actively protect their own culture and history through preserving the architecture and land.

To be able to work in this field, I believe a high level knowledge of urban planning and environment is necessary. I should be able to know that in what way could human live harmoniously with the local environment and at the same time respecting and preserving the local culture. I should also know about many cases of planning all over the world especially in China as references when facing different

circumstances. Thus a strong skill of doing individual research is needed. Moreover, I need to be able to not only complete the planning work by myself but also with a team. A strong communication skill is needed so I could express ideas to both co-workers and customers.

In order to achieve all these goals, firstly and most importantly, a solid knowledge of urban planning and environmental studies must be developed through taking courses at school and self-exploration in spare time. Basic knowledge of policy-making, sociology, anthropology, management and communication should also be developed through taking a variety of courses. At least two internships and one individual research in related area should be done in order to apply my knowledge to some real working experiences. I should also get involved in some social activities planning for practicing my communication skills. My first step after graduating is to get a job related to my field of interest. Tourism planning would be a great start since it involves both cultural preservation and environmental protection. Moreover I would also have a chance to educate people and publicize the ideas of living well with the natural and our ancestor's treasures. I hope to pursue a master degree in urban planning after working for a period of time and ensuring my direction of career. Eventually I would go back to China and do whatever I can to protect the balance between people and environment, preserving culture and nature.



Kanas Lake, Xinjiang, China, Sept. 2011

Visual Map of Course Plan

Academic Year:				2011-12			
AUTUMN		WINTER		SPRING		SUMMER	
Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit
CEP 301	5	CEP 302	5	CEP 303	5	ESRM 250	5
CEP 300	1	ARCH 210	4	CEP 300	1	ESRM 320	5
URBDP 498	1	L ARCH 362	3	ESRM 479	5	ARCH 151	3
ANTH 406	5			CEP 498	5		
Q SCI 381	5			CHID 498	1		
Quarter total:	17	Quarter total:	12	Quarter total:	17	Quarter total:	13
Academic Year:				2012-13			
AUTUMN		WINTER		SPRING		SUMMER	
Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit
(CHID Berlin)		CEP 461	5	CEP 462	5		
JSIS 494	5	CEP 446	5	CEP 300	1		
CHID 471	5	CEP 491	1	CEP 400	1		
JSIS 499	5	URBDP 474	3	ART H 494	3		
		ARCH 452	3	ARCH 410	3		
		ESRM 429	1				
Quarter total:	15	Quarter total:	18	Quarter total:	13	Quarter total:	0

KEY
Methods Credits
Diversity
Core Courses
Requirement for ESRM Minor
Remaining General Education Reqs

Course Description

In this section, I list all the classes I have taken in 2 years for 7 quarters from 2011 to 2013 and briefly describe how these courses could be helpful to my educational goal. Each course is marked with its category and also linked to the course description given by the university's course catalog.

According to graduation requirements of CEP, 6 CEP core courses (CEP 301, 302, 303, 460, 461, 462), 1 internship course (CEP 446), 4 retreat courses (CEP 300), 2 senior project preparation classes (CEP 490, 491), 25 credits of methods courses and 5 credits of diversity course must be taken. The governance practicum course (CEP 400) is required for each quarter since fall 2012. I was waived for CEP 400, 460, 300 and 490 for fall quarter 2012 due to study abroad. I was also waived for CEP 400 for winter quarter 2013 due to issue of over credit limit.

The method courses are defined as “courses that provide ways of knowing, ways of thinking, or ways of doing” for students. They must be upper division courses. According to CEP ISP criteria document, the appropriate methods courses include: qualitative (interviews, observations) and quantitative (surveys, statistics) methods; research design methods; design and visual analysis and communication; methods of symbolic or discursive interpretation or analysis; critical theory; computer applications (including GIS) and modeling; group dynamics and methods of facilitation and leadership; ethics and philosophy; theory and methods of organizational change; processes of communication; specialized writing; and so on.

The diversity should be at least 5 credits courses that, according to CEP ISP criteria document, “critically analyze and address issue of social difference in our society.” This could be course that “explicitly addresses social constructs or experiences of race, ethnicity, culture or other forms of difference within American society, or a course that examines issues from a perspective different than that of dominant US cultures.”

Quick Link:

[AUTUMN 2011](#)

[WINTER 2012](#)

[SPRING 2012](#)

[SUMMER 2012](#)

[AUTUMN 2012](#)

[WINTER 2013](#)

[SPRING 2013](#)

AUTUMN 2011

CEP 301 The Idea of Community (Core course, 5 crs)

- This is a philosophy class introducing different ideas about what community is according to different philosophers in different historic period. Through the class I learned about how a community is formed, and why people gathered and lived together through studying different philosophical ideas of different philosophers. These thoughts and knowledge helped me build up the ideology basis of the community that I will design in the future.

CEP 300 CEP Retreat (Core course, 1 cr)

- Through this fall retreat, I knew more about people in this 2013 class who I would spend the future two years with. Moreover, by learning more about CEP it self, it helped me to develop the objectives I want to achieve during this two years CEP program, and the strategies I might need to use.

URBDP 498 Planning as a profession (Methods course, 1 cr)

- Through listening to different guest speakers from different areas of planning talking about their experience and careers, I knew more possibilities and options as being a planner in the futures and also felt more confident about entering this field.

ANTH 406 Environment and Society in China (Methods course, 5 crs)

- Through the instruction class according to professor Harrel's experiences in China and abundant readings about different development aspects related to China, I knew more about my home country's context related to environmental issues from an academic side. It helped me to have a different view on China's environmental issues and policies, which would be helpful to my future careers in China.

Q SCI 381 Introduction to probability and statistics (5 crs)

- The understanding of basic statistics could help me work with the data collecting and analyzing for doing research. It is an important skill skill for a planner to learn about the local background and decide the way of planning.

WINTER 2012

CEP 302 Environmental Response (Core course, 5 crs)

- Through this course, I learned more knowledge about global warming and what strategies are people using in order to be adapted to the environmental changes. I learned skills of reading the different climate models and also basic GIS skills that helps me to make maps, which would be very useful to my research in future. The group working on environmental paper and presentation also helped me build up skills of working with a team as well as role of leading.

ARCH 210 Design Drawing (Methods courses, 4 crs)

- This introduction class to architecture drawing enabled me to be more familiar with knowledge of architecture graphics. Through doing 5 different projects by using different drawing skills, I became confident to do free-hand drawing and perspective drawing of architecture and sites.

L ARCH 362 Designing Urban Landscapes: Theory and Politics (Methods courses, 3 crs)

- Through this first landscape architecture and urban planning related class I am taking, I had a general idea of what the landscape architecture is about and also some urban designing knowledge. This was a very important starting point for my urban planning careers and after taking the class. I felt more confident about doing career in landscape architecture and urban planning. It also helped me develop some new ideas of the direction of future career.

SPRING 2012

CEP 303 Social Structures and Processes (Core courses, 5 crs)

- Through learning the relationships between community and environment by real cases, and working on lake city project with team members, I developed better understanding about the process of community planning and different methods of working with public on urban planning issues.

ESRM 479 Restoration Design (ESRM minor requirement, 5crs)

- Through learning the design process in ecosystem restoration through real cases, I learned practical skills of restoration and designing methods, which would help me with building up a more solid urban planning knowledge. Moreover working with a team and figuring out the designing problems strengthened my communications skills, which would help me work with both colleagues and customers in future.

CEP 498 Digital Design (Methods courses, 5 crs)

- By taking this class, I learned five different software, Photoshop, illustrator, InDesign, Sketchup and ArcMap GIS, which would all be helpful to my future research when analyzing, displaying and formatting data. They would also be very helpful for my upcoming internship and senior project.

SUMMER 2012

ESRM 250 Introduction to GIS (ESRM minor requirements, 5 crs)

- By studying the theory of GIS in detail and practice different function by doing the assignment, my GIS skill has been significantly improved. I became being able to do the map analysis, data classification, 3D map modeling and so on according to research need. The GIS skill could be very useful while I am doing my on independent study in the future relating to map creating and data analysis.

ESRM 320 Marketing and Management from a Sustainability perspective (ESRM minor requirements, 5crs)

- This class taught me the basic concepts of marketing and management in environmental field, which will be helpful if I work in a private firm in the future. Moreover, through reading and writing a paper on sustainable reports from three big food companies, I understood how firms in current century are valuing and considering about "being green" and what actions they have made in order to be more sustainable as required.

ARCH 151 Appreciation of Architecture II (Methods course, 3 crs)

- This class taught the characteristics of architecture styles from renaissance to modern 21st century by using famous and representative architecture. The knowledge of architecture helped me develop my appreciation of beauty, and it made my study abroad experience more meaningful and interesting by being able to recognize and think no only the appearance of a beautiful building, but also more about its history and architectural style in Europe.

AUTUMN 2012

In autumn quarter of 2012, I attended the CHID-Berlin program for entire quarter ten weeks from September to December. Syllabus and detailed instruction methods could be found on CHID Website [Germany: Historical memory, Germany Unification, and the Future of the European Union](#) as well as the [course website](#). I have also composed a blog recording the living and traveling experience in Germany, please see [HERE](#).

Courses offered were:

JSIS A 494 From Bonn to Berlin and Brussels: Political Transformations in Germany and its role in the EU (Diversity Course, 5 crs)

- By learning the major transformation in Germany since 1945 especially during the division and later unification of East and West Germany, this class gave me very different understanding of German politics, economy, culture and architecture that I never knew. It was especially interesting when I learn this history from a German professor, with a group of American students, as a native Chinese. These three culture backgrounds all have different understanding toward the same history based on their own perspectives, which made me realized how history could be very subjective, but still true for all.

CHID 471 Memorializing the Past and Present in Berlin (5 crs)

- This course focused on different way of memorialization in Berlin for its history, especially about the Jews. By visiting different types of museums and monument in the city and taking lectures about efforts and intentions behind these differences, I grew a better understanding of how physical forms are important to preserve a city's culture and history and how urban design could affect people's perception on specific issues.

JSIS 499 Independent Research Project (5 crs)

- My independent study's topic is "The Past and Present: Political Influences and Identity Change Behind the Development of Pariser Platz". I wanted to understand how the meanings of a monument could be changed by political and citizen's need, and how could its importance been preserved through time, which in another word, keeping alive and activated.

For more details about my reflection of this study abroad experience, please see the Study Abroad chapter on page 16.

WINTER 2013

CEP 461 Ethics and Identity (Core courses, 5 crs)

- The study of personal, societal and environmental planning ethics helped me to rethink about my career goal of preserving culture and history while doing urban design and planning. Learning different philosophers' theories allowed me to rethink about my way of thinking and develop a better understanding of people's relationship.

CEP 446 Internship (Core courses, 5 crs)

- Reviewing the internship I did during summer and summarizing the skills and knowledge I learned from the internship. The discussion and sharing our experiences in class enabled me to hear others' stories and things they have learned from their internship, which are sometimes very helpful to me. Having a better understanding of what I have learned from my internship also helped me to apply the knowledge to my senior project.

URBDP 474 Site Planning (Methods course, 3 crs)

- Through the class, I learned how to make the urban area more convenient, comfortable and lively for the residents through creating residential and commercial plan myself. Moreover, since tourism planning is also a potential direction of my career, learning the recreation design might give me ideas about how to make people enjoy the place they are living and traveling to and at the same time protect the local ecology and culture.

ARCH 452 History of Architecture in Seattle and Environments (Methods course, 3 crs)

- This class gave me general history of Seattle architecture and city development. It was helpful to my senior project to have a general idea of how the architecture style in Seattle was transformed and what were the main issues that influenced the city's development.

ESRM 429 Water Seminar (ESRM minor requirement, 1 cr)

- Water is crucial resource to future development. Through listening to speakers from various working field, I knew more about modern strategies of water preservation and utilization.

SPRING 2013

CEP 462 Environment and Community (Core courses, 5 crs)

- This class of merging all the prior knowledge and skills will help me steady all I learned from two year in CEP program and preparing for working in the urban planning field. It is also the final step helps me to ensure my direction of career and building up a strong skill for that.

ARCH 410 Introduction to Architectural Photography (Methods Credits, 3 crs)

- This class, by teaching how to use film camera to take photos for architecture, gave me knowledge on how to take a professional photo for buildings and landscape, which I believe would be helpful for me to include my own photography work in future project in order to show my ideas. Moreover, I am personally also interested in photography and planning to build up an album on Flickr for future photography project references.

ART H 494 Paris: Architecture and Urbanism (Methods Credits, 3 crs)

- This class covers the architectural history of Paris from its pre-Roman origins through twenty-first century, introducing the urbanization process and architectural style transition in details. It was especially attractive to me because Paris as one of the most developed and beautiful cities in the world has a very advanced underground sewerage system and distinctive city characteristics. I am interested in learning how did this city preserve its buildings and natural environment while embracing the modern elements. This would be helpful as references to my future work back to China in historic preservation field.

Internship

Guangdong Urban & Rural Planning and Design Institute

July 2012 – September 2012

Responsibilities:

Work title: Planner Assistant. Responsibilities include: thesis writing, cases researching and analyzing, document and image editing, mainly involved in three projects which are "Research of Guangdong City Development Strategies based on Community Culture", "Investigation of Singapore Urban Development Report", and "Guangdong Greenway Planning and Practices".

Reflections:

I regard this internship as a great chance to see how Chinese planners are working, and how the governmental organization is working with the public. In general, Chinese planning department is more top-down working system which public involvement is rare and usually not an important part of decision making. As a public department, part of this institute's work is directly assigned by the local government, and in this case, normally is counseling for new-coming city development policies. The other important part of work for the institute is the contract work of urban planning from government or private companies.

For the one month working with the institute, I realized that my education and traveling experience abroad are very valuable offering different cases studies and bringing developed planning ideas from the western countries. My software skills, including CAD, GIS and Photoshop, really needed to be improved and solidified by doing more practices. My writing skills also need to be changed in order to meet the governmental document style.

Due to unexpected work amount, which I had to working during weekend, I did not get a chance to do independent research in local villages as planned. However, the papers and researches I read during working gave me a lot of information about China's current city development. This knowledge might be useful in future while doing my senior project.

SCIDpda - IDEA Space

April 2013 – Present

Responsibilities:

Work title: Marketing and Fundraising Intern for Chinatown Historic Alley Partnership (CHAP) project. Responsibilities include: creating marketing materials for ongoing fundraising events and efforts, reaching out former residents and broader community to help build donor base, building relationship with other alley revitalization organization such as Alley Net Work in Pioneer Square, creating brochure for business attraction specific to alleys, creating and maintaining email list for volunteers and donor, updating the organization's blog regularly.

Reflections:

SCIDpda, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development authority, is a neighborhood-based community non-profit organization, aiming to preserve, promote and develop the Seattle's Chinatown International District. The IDEA Space is the design and resource center that belongs to the pda that serves as a catalyst for spurring dialogues and mobilizing community members to participate in the decisions and will shape the neighborhood. The CHAP project is an alley revitalization effort taking space in Canton and Maynard alley Seattle Chinatown International District, organizing alley events and renovation design that will help to bring people back to these historic alleys.

This internship perfectly meets my academic goals of historic preservation and public education, and allows me to explore more about the how non-profit organization works with both government and community. It is a great learning experience for me to work with a community-oriented organization like this because I think this process of public engagement is what is missing in current planning work in China. People do not feel they do have power to change the environment they are living in and do not know how to get involved in this process. By working with IDEA Space, I am learning many very useful and effective methods of gathering the public and distributing information about our project. The position as marketing and fundraising is also a very fresh experience to me since it is my first time doing this type of work. I have opportunity to practice my digital design skills and able to meet with many different people from the neighborhood and other organization. This has improved my communication techniques and made more connections with people in planning field. The alley revitalization project later has been developed as the subject of my senior project.

Study Abroad

In autumn quarter of 2012, I attended the CHID-Berlin program for entire quarter ten weeks from September to December.

I always want to go to Germany for its complex history. I am really interested in how the culture and history are preserved while at the same time introducing new elements to the city. Moreover personally I am also very interested in the Germany's history especially the time around middle ages but never had a chance to learn about it. This was a perfect program for giving me a chance to learn more about Germany and Europe, and to satisfy both personal curiosity and diversity course requirement. It was also a very special opportunity to learn about a different culture based on experiencing this city through field trips as well as understanding European issues from a different perspective with American classmates.

Living in Berlin for two month gave me many surprises. From planning perspective, I never realize how history could have such big influences on the city development and design. I could see buildings with different styles from division period on East and West that remind people about that part of history everyday. The palaces from Prussian time have also been well preserved and exhibited that show another part of history of this city. Museums and monuments related to WW2 are scattered in the city, telling stories from different perspectives in different way. Walking around today's Berlin, signs about the war and the division could be seen here and there. I admire from heart how Germans embrace all these parts of their history and live with them. Although discussion about ways of memorial in this generation has been kept going, the idea of don't forget and keep moving in general hasn't changed. Berlin has grown in an organic way that it records the traces of history and grows with residents of this city. I think this is what a city should be like. The history is kept, and people building new things based on that. It is always a process of accumulation.

This study abroad experience also allowed me to travel to 14 cities in Europe. It was very revealing and inspiring to explore different living and architectural styles. From past internship and class project experiences, I realize the importance of visiting and feeling different cities since all these experiences will later become useful resources and references for new planning and design. Only by going on-site and living with local people can I learn the most authentic knowledge about city's layout, history and culture. Moreover, I also found out traveling to be an attitude of living, an idea of always keep walking, exploring and enjoying the new findings. It is also about a romantic process of guessing and realizing. Even the time was short, I still went to Florence for one day. At the moment I was standing on the Duomo of Florence Cathedral and watching the sun set bathed this city of the new urban planning and Renaissance origin, the satisfy stayed long and sweet.

For more details about the program and courses set up, please see [Autumn 2012](#) section on page 11.

Senior Project

To develop to the final decision on doing my senior project about alley revitalization, there were mainly three phases.

At the beginning, since my field of interest is the urban planning and cultural preservation in China, I was planning to do my senior project related to Chinese village planning, development and preservation with my current mentor, professor Daniel Abramson. In winter quarter of 2012, I was connected with an urban planning graduate student, Jennifer Tippins, who is interested in village-based cultural tourism planning in China. So, Kailin, who is the other CEP student, and I worked with her for that winter and spring quarter on doing the pre-phase literature studies on her research topic: the traditional landscape system in Sichuan - Linpan. By helping her prepare her research, I also learned a lot of knowledge about China's landscape architecture preservation and many practical research methods, which will help me to prepare and develop my research. Later during my internship in Guangzhou, I was thinking about doing a field research on the land use of a rural village closed to Guangzhou. However, due to unexpected workload during internship, the plan of independent research has failed.

Then, while I was studying abroad in Germany and thinking about my senior project proposal, I started with an idea of creating something that is functional to public and could last long even after I graduate. Eventually I wrote my proposal about creating a walking tour for historic buildings in Chinatown International District. The original site of neighborhood was one of the earliest developed neighborhood in Seattle almost founded the same time with the pioneer square neighborhood in 1960s. There are many architectures and sites within the neighborhood have many interesting and mysterious hidden stories behind. If the public could know more about them, there could be potential more donations to the preservation and renovation of these historic buildings and sites. I chose this neighborhood as my site because I feel more connected as an Asian and I am also very curious about how the Asian culture has been merged and changed with American culture through time.

However, at the end of winter quarter, through Jennifer Tippins, I was connected to the SCIDpda and the alley revitalization project. I applied for the internship position and got in. If both in the same neighborhood, I was thinking, why not develop a project from this internship since I will be very familiar with the alley revitalization process and having access to more information through internship. The goal of creating something useful for public didn't changed. So at the end, I decided to create a model for alley revitalization process, using figures and graphics to show the public in short amount of time about what revitalization is and how they could be a part of this process. The model will be built based on experience of Canton Alley revitalization and the final model will be posted on my e-portfolio for public access.