“Our mission is to educate diverse, talented students to be responsible leaders in a rapidly changing, interdependent world, to prepare graduates who will be ethical advocates for justice and the rule of law....”

(School of Law Mission Statement)

International News

“Special Student Issue

During the summer of 2010, Loyola law students took the initiative to engage in a number of law-related activities that took them outside the United States. Some of these students studied in Loyola’s study abroad programs in Beijing, Rome, and Strasbourg. Other students obtained legal jobs or internships overseas, some of which were supported by International Summer Fellowship Grants from the law school. This issue of International News is devoted to students’ stories, in their own words, of their summer international experiences.

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Beijing by Jim Arce

I stepped out of the Beijing Capital Airport after a pretty adventurous flight that included screaming babies, fine Chinese cuisine, and constant sunlight, and I uttered the words that would become the theme of our trip: “We’re in China.”

Stepping off the plane, I was thrilled to see Dean Jean at the airport as she was the only familiar face that I had seen after almost a full day of traveling. My classmates and I jumped onto the bus that she had reserved for us, and we made our way to the University of International Business and Economics, a place we called home for the next month.

I chose to go to China because I wanted to step out of my comfort zone. I had been to Rome as an undergrad and absolutely loved it. I told myself that now would be the perfect time to go to China because I couldn’t see myself ever going on my own. To say that China was frustrating at times is an understatement. There were days that I was convinced that I was on the show Boiling Points (for all my MTV aficionados) and that the locals were just pushing me to see how far they could take it. Like the time it took an hour and a half for the cook at Stitch in Time to make two fried eggs, thus causing seven of us to be a half hour late to our first International Business Transactions class. Or the time a taxi driver tried to charge a friend of mine an extra one hundred yuan for a ride back from the airport. After each of these occurrences, all we could do is shrug and say, “We’re in China.”
Beijing (cont.)

It was for all these reasons and more that I cherished every moment I was in China. I was excited for class every morning and enjoyed the trips we took each afternoon to different historic sites like Tiananmen Square and the Great Wall. The courses were taught by professors who were so obviously passionate about the subject they were teaching that learning came easily. China’s history is so rich that it’s easy to lose yourself in the moment, and it was a struggle to come back down to reality sometimes. Of course, the favorable 7 to 1 yuan to dollar exchange rate helped ease the transition, especially at Lisa’s Tailor Shop and the Pearl Market.

From the cooking classes, tandem bike rides, and the occasional Boiling Points moment, I had one of the greatest experiences of my life. I wish everyday that I go back and once again proclaim, “We’re in China.”
Rome by Wes Webendorfer

As someone who had not traveled to Europe prior to beginning Loyola’s study abroad program in Rome, I was a bit concerned about the language barrier and potential culture shock as I stepped off the plane in Rome’s Fiumicino Airport. However, I soon realized after settling in to Loyola’s John Felice Rome Center Campus on the high hill of Monte Mario, that I couldn’t have been more fortunate to spend my summer in Italy.

Students took comparative law courses every Monday through Thursday morning. Weekday afternoons and evenings provided a great opportunity to visit historic sights and museums and to take in the Roman nightlife. Nearly every student spent time exploring the Colosseum, Vatican City, Roman Forum and Trevi Fountain. I was glad I devoted time to seeing attractions that a tourist with only a few days might miss, such as the Galleria Borghese, which boasts incredible 17th century Bernini sculptures, and the Villa Borghese park, which provides a pleasant break from the crowded city.

For dinner, pasta, wine, and gelato were usually on the agenda. Some of my favorite and most memorable meals out in Rome were within walking distance of the Rome Center. Most of these restaurants were local “mom and pop” establishments where the pasta was made by hand, the atmosphere was laid-back, and meals sometimes lasted close to three hours.

For most students, weekends were spent traveling in Italy or other parts of Europe. A group of friends and I were fortunate to visit Florence and Cinque Terre. Florence was a beautiful, pedestrian-friendly town steeped in Renaissance art and architecture. Cinque Terre is on the Italian Riviera so we spent most of our time swimming in the Mediterranean and taking in the food and culture of the tiny towns set into the steep, terraced coastline.

The highlight of the academic program featured a course taught by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia entitled “Separation of Powers.” Justice Scalia taught every class and prepared all of the course materials. It was a rewarding educational experience for students to engage in interactive discussions both during and after class with Justice Scalia regarding his judicial philosophy of originalism and his history on the Court.

“Dean Jean” Gasparo coordinated a terrific program in Rome that included just the right mix of cultural and academic experiences. I recommend the program to any law student in need of an adventure between 1L and 2L years.
Strasbourg by Michael McClain

After finishing up our finals at the John Felice Rome Center, and having survived Associate Justice Scalia’s baptism by fire, some of us still hadn’t had our fill of European culture (or food). We had all caught the ‘travel bug,’ and I personally saw Strasbourg as the remedy. The city is quaint yet vibrant, and though the day-long train ride from Termini to la Gare de Strasbourg served as quite an exterminator, arriving in Strasbourg was refreshing enough to make me want to stay, even before I could set down my bags.

Those students that continued from Rome to Strasbourg were lucky enough to attend classes on the European Legal Institutions, taught by Professor Allen Shoenberger. Apart from the lectures and reading, we toured many of the important bodies of the European legal community, including the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, and the European Court of Justice (located in Luxemburg). As three of those institutions have their headquarters in Strasbourg, our location in the capital of Alsace-Lorraine could not have been more perfect.

The history of Strasbourg makes it a quite interesting part of France. The city has created its own hybrid culture from its time under both French and German rule, and I know that some of my fellow students’ most fond memories of France involve their experience with the “Brezel.” While it is simply a German pretzel, its place in Strasbourg cuisine is not to be underestimated. When we weren’t busy discussing the European Convention on Human Rights or competition law, Strasbourg had plenty to offer. From the nightly light show at Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-Strasbourg, to the laser show over the river and the rose shaped ice-cream cones, I found Strasbourg exciting and revitalizing. Though there was no lack of culture and fun to be had in Strasbourg, it didn’t keep any of us from travelling elsewhere. I spent our free weekend visiting friends in Brussels, while many others visited Paris, the Black Forest, Baden-Baden, Amsterdam, and Dusseldorf. With only two weeks left in Europe, we all tried to squeeze the most out of our time (and our Euros).

Strasbourg was quite a change of pace from our time in Rome. Not only was our workload much lighter, and the weather much cooler, but with a smaller group we felt more like a family. On our first official night together, “Dean Jean” Gaspardo was kind enough to take us on a walking tour through downtown, past the beautiful canals, and into the neighborhood called La Petite France. Dean Jean and Professor Shoenberger also brought us together for wine and cheese tastings, trips to a former concentration camp named Natzweiler-Struthof and La Montagne des singes (“Monkey Mountain”) as well as a boat tour through the canals of Strasbourg.

We were lucky enough to share one last dinner together with Dean Jean and Professor Shoenberger in La Petite France before we all ran off to catch trains, buses and planes (or all three) in the morning. As our time together was coming to an end, we all left with enriched perspectives on our European counterparts, politics, federalism, sovereignty and law as well as several new friends and experiences we would never forget.
INTERNATIONAL SUMMER FELLOWSHIP GRANTS

UNICEF West Africa Regional Office by Joshua Dankoff

This summer, with partial support from Loyola’s International Programs Committee, I spent six weeks in Cameroon (in Central Africa) carrying out an assessment of the juvenile justice system as an intern for UNICEF. The assessment covered children in conflict with the law and child victims of crimes. I also spoke with some traditional leaders who adjudicate children’s cases in parallel systems of justice.

I spent about half of my time in Yaoundé, the capital, meeting with officials at the national level from the Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs, and with non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders. I spent the remaining time traveling to other cities to meet with judges, lawyers, NGOs, observing court proceedings, and visiting prisons. In preparing the report for UNICEF (the end product of the internship), I worked hard to incorporate many voices, acknowledge the strengths of the system as well as its weaknesses, and make recommendations that are both feasible and strategic. The report – which is not yet available for public distribution – seeks to provide a moment in time look at how children in conflict with the law and child victims experience the justice system in Cameroon. An overall goal of the report is to comment on how Cameroon’s juvenile justice system might be brought into line with the obligations undertaken as signatory to, among other instruments, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Specifically, I tried to identify opportunities to ameliorate access to justice, provide alternatives to incarceration, and ultimately divert children from entering the formal justice system altogether through both diversion projects and prevention.

During the course off my time in Cameroon, some of the most powerful experiences I had were visiting six prisons and meeting with incarcerated children. The vast majority of imprisoned children in Cameroon are accused of theft or aggravated theft, and most are still awaiting their trial. The average time a child will spend in prison awaiting trial is 8 months, though I met some children that had spent more than 24 months in prison having not yet been judged guilty. While Cameroonian law provides for children to be represented by counsel or “any other person who is a specialist in the protection of children’s rights,” most children are unrepresented. Children generally eat one meal a day in prison, though – unsurprisingly – they consistently complain that this is not enough food.

The internship was a result of collaboration among UNICEF-Cameroon, government partners at the Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs, the UNICEF West and Central Regional Office, Loyola University Chicago School of Law, and Northwestern University School of Law. After a joint training in Chicago in June, three recent Northwestern LLM graduates conducted similar studies in Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

I truly enjoyed the opportunity to work with colleagues at UNICEF, an institution for which I have great respect. UNICEF’s mandate includes child protection and children in conflict with the law; these important topics implicate questions of the rule of law and human rights, and deserve our attention.

To hear a discussion of juvenile justice in Cameroon on the WBEZ radio program Worldview with Professor Diane Geraghty and Josh Dankoff, please visit: http://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=43841.
Majmudar and Shah, Gujarat, India by Umang Desai

This summer, I had the opportunity to work at Majmudar and Shah, a corporate law firm based in Gujarat, India. During this time, I learned a great deal about Indian and surprisingly American law. It was also a unique opportunity because it was my first extended stay in a foreign country and I was forced to quickly acclimate myself to Indian tradition and the legal culture in Gujarat. Being of Indian decent, I was excited to experience the working environment there, and I feel that my time there taught me not only about practicing law in various settings, but I also learned a great deal about the community, something only attainable by actually living in a specific place for an extended period of time.

In many ways, India’s laws have a structure very similar to that found in the United States. The legal systems of both countries have roots tracing back to England based on that country’s rule over India and America at one point in time. In relation to these similarities and differences, one of my projects with the firm was to complete a comparative analysis on the nations’ treatment of contract and property law, which culminated in a presentation to the firm’s lawyers and clerks. For the firm, it was a way to gain insight into the American laws in hopes of expanding their business on an international level. For me, it was a way to quickly learn various parts of India’s legal code while strengthening my knowledge of American laws and applying what I learned from my first year of law school. My research did not consist of just learning the law; once I became familiar with these laws, I had the chance to work with clients of various sizes to prepare legal cases and related strategies. I was responsible for researching various issues and finding case law and legislative history to support the clients’ positions. Based on this research, I assisted in drafting various documents for both internal and external use and also drafted and edited client contracts for use in a wide range of activities.

During my summer, I also spent some time in Gujarat’s local courts. Here, I learned the process for transferring properties and completing other legal paperwork not related to litigation. While at the courts, I sat in on various legal proceedings ranging from corporate lawsuits to legal disputes, and even a couple of criminal matters. I assisted the firm’s lawyers in the procedural aspects of legal work by preparing drafts for filing cases, filing motions with the court, and requesting hearing dates from the judges and their clerks (to gain an understanding as to the upcoming court dates and procedures for each client). These tasks allowed me to accompany clients and other lawyers to the court, providing me great insight into the client interactions common to lawyers in India but applicable to the legal setting in many different countries. Spending my summer in India was a very unique experience which I believe will follow me throughout my legal career. Along with the opportunity to deal with transnational laws and how the law is treated in another part of the world, I also gained a vast knowledge of interpreting and applying law in new, often unknown, jurisdictions. Working on an international level has broadened my approach to the legal world, and I believe this experience will serve to help shape the way I practice law and deal with my colleagues and clients in the future. My time in India surpassed any expectations I had going in, and I would like to thank the International Programs Committee for this once in the lifetime opportunity.
Arbitration Law in Sydney, Australia  
by Ryan Fournier

This summer I had the opportunity to travel to Sydney, Australia to conduct interviews for an article for the International Law Review that I am writing. In the last few years, many countries have taken steps to amend their outdated arbitration laws and rebrand themselves as attractive venues for international arbitration. My law review article will focus on the newly amended Australian law.

In June 2010, Australia amended its International Arbitration Act of 1974, the law governing international arbitrations in Australia, by passing the International Arbitration Amendment Act of 2010. Australia decided to amend for many reasons, particularly because Australia had a poor reputation as a venue compared to other Asia-Pacific countries. Additionally, Australian court interpretations added constraints that were out of line with international practices. Overall, Australia passed this law because it wanted to encourage the growth of arbitration and hopefully become one of the world’s most attractive venues for international arbitrations.

The trip to Australia was invaluable. Given that the amended law is only two months old, there is no published information on it. While this would make research difficult, the grant from the International Programs Committee allowed me to meet with people in Sydney who were a part of the entire amending process. I met with academics, attorneys who were a part of the drafting process, attorneys at an Australian law firm, and individuals who work at the Australian International Dispute Centre and the Australian Center for International Commercial Arbitration.

Even though I got food poisoning coming back from Sydney, the wonderful part about this trip is that it really has not ended – these contacts are continuing to be extremely helpful. They continue to show investment in my article, answer my follow up questions, offer feedback, and direct me to new people who might help as well. This trip to Sydney was amazing and rewarding, and I am extremely grateful that I am at a law school that supports its students in this fashion. Without a doubt, I know I will have a strong article because of the opportunity that Loyola provided.

Lehman, Lee & Xu, Beijing, China  
by Matthew Mahre

I recently spent my 1L summer working as a summer associate at Lehman, Lee & Xu, LLP – a law firm with Chinese and American lawyers - in Beijing, China. After a bevy of flight delays and cancellations I finally arrived in the capital of the fastest growing economy in the world.

Working for the third largest Chinese law firm provided a wealth of opportunity. My duties consisted mainly of conducting legal
research for a select number of intellectual property cases, writing briefing papers on various legal topics for the firm’s website, and proofreading translated legal documents, which often contained rather humorous grammatical errors.

Learning the intricacies of the Chinese law system proved to be somewhat of a challenge - especially when trying to factor in the ever-present "guanxi," or political connections, that can drastically alter the outcome of a case. Unlike in the U.S., one never knows the outcome of case prior to its conclusion, especially if it involves a foreign party.

More than just legal knowledge, the experience provided a wealth of personal experiences that will never be forgotten. My limited Chinese was just enough to get around, make sure I wasn’t eating anything too strange (although, who really knows), as well as make some unforgettable friends. Cramming into the subway on the way to work each day, although an experience the first week, grew old fast. A rather flexible work schedule allowed several weekend trips to Xian and Tianjin in China and to Seoul, South Korea. And a July 31st end date allowed a few weeks to further explore the eastern hemisphere. All in all, it was a memorable experience that I would not trade for anything.

**Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile** by Justin McDevitt

Less than a week before I left Chile, my cousin Jenny got married back home in Houston. Call it bad planning on my part, or bad timing, call it anything in English or Spanish, but I couldn’t be there for her. Unaware of my home-heartedness, my friends at Universidad Alberto Hurtado had chosen that day for my going-away party at our professor’s house. The night was full of pictures and pisco, stories and a specially home-cooked (Mexican!) dinner in my honor. And as the night wound down, the time came for me to express my thanks and to share with the table what my six weeks in Chile had meant to me.

First of all, you should know that Universidad Alberto Hurtado is a Jesuit university in Santiago, Chile, with a law school. As a Jesuit school, the focus is on being inclusive and outward-oriented. There is a lot of work to be done in the world, and the more hands doing it, the better. This summer, I was fortunate enough to be welcomed by those hands, and then to become one in turn. After a few days acclimatizing to the culture, the layout of the city, and the adjustment from Texas summer to Andean winter, I met with my professor at the law school, Macarena Rodriguez, to get my marching orders.
Because I was on a sort of self-starting, informal exchange program, we worked together to find ways I could be present, helpful, and educated during my six weeks at UAH. I began by doing a bit of translation work: an article on standards of appellate review written by one of the faculty, then a shorter piece on immigration reform in Chile since Pinochet, and finally working with another professor editing his article on corrective versus distributive justice. In the process, I found that I really needed to be proficient in two languages: Spanish and the law in Spanish.

Another rewarding part of my responsibility at UAH was to participate in legal clinics for immigration- and labor-based clients who could not afford legal counsel. In Chile, students study law directly after high school and graduate in five years, so the students taking real cases under professors’ supervision were usually 21 or 22. If that wasn’t impressive enough, a few of them even appeared in court on behalf of their clients. It made me realize there is a lot that we could be doing at Loyola on behalf of our own communities on the home front.

Finally, I helped prepare the Chilean exchange students for their trip to Loyola in October, advising them on their English proficiency and teaching a short class on the American legal system. This past week, I have been able to reconnect with many of them here in Chicago as they spent a week getting to know the city and researching their independent study projects.

As I said that night at dinner, my friends at UAH were my family away from home, not just because we were stuck with each other, but because we worked together to run a sort of home. The love and compassion that the students at UAH showed for the poor, the foreign, and the hard-working people of the community makes me proud to be part of an outward-looking tradition of service at Loyola, too.
Chicago Legal Clinic, Pilsen Office by Saren Stiegel

This summer I had an internship with the Chicago Legal Clinic’s Pilsen office, which focuses solely on immigration issues. You might be thinking, “Staying in Chicago doesn’t count as an international experience!” Granted, I did not use transportation beyond the CTA to achieve my international experience. However, if you have ever been to Pilsen, comprised mainly of people from Mexico and Central and South American immigrants, then you know “international” is an appropriate description.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, I would leave the English-speaking streets of the Gold Coast and, a few El stops later, I would enter the predominantly Spanish-speaking streets of Pilsen. Upon arrival at the modest immigration clinic, housed in the basement of a brownstone, there would likely be a Mexican crowd in the waiting area eager to speak to an attorney. Often I would have the opportunity to sit in on an intake consultation. Much of the work in the clinic was administrative, meaning that the main focus of immigration work is forms. For example, I drafted a Violence Against Women’s Act application (VAWA) for a client whose abusive husband had sponsored her stay in the US and was threatening deportation if she left him. Applying under VAWA provided her the opportunity to gain residency without her husband’s interference.

Stories of losing loved ones to deportation motivated the office. I had the opportunity to conduct research and assist the attorneys in advocating on such issues. Between the morning and afternoons of legalese and clinic activity, the interns and I would venture out into the Pilsen abyss of taquitos, tamales, and tostadas. Entering the bustling Pilsen restaurants, you would have trouble knowing whether you were still in Chicago or you had entered the establishments of Mexico.

My position with the Chicago Legal Clinic lent me the opportunity to witness implementation of the United States’ immigration laws. What I witnessed was a collision between the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and what appears to be a helpless immigrant with no home. On one instance, I observed an Adjustment of Status hearing where a Loyola adjunct law professor and immigration judge, Robert Vinikoor, saved the life of a thirteen-year-old girl by granting her father Cancellation of Removal. The burden, according to the Immigration and Nationality Act, was on the father to prove that his family would suffer “Exceptional and Extremely Unusual” hardship, the highest burden in immigration law, if they had to leave the country. The Mexican-American girl had been diagnosed with kidney disease, and her Mexican father was applying for permanent residence. He wanted to donate one of his kidneys to her. It is likely that the girl’s extreme and unusual hardship of her father’s potential deportation would have been an open and shut case for his change of status. Yet, on numerous instances, he had driven without a license. For an undocumented person, a repeated offense of this type is reason for immediate deportation. Judge Vinikoor had a difficult decision: to uphold the law for immigrants or to give this older man with a desperate daughter a second chance. In an outburst of tears from the courtroom, I watched the weeping family embrace upon Judge Vinikoor’s push for justice. Thanks to the diligent work of advocates and the interplay of the international world with the Chicago legal sphere, a girl would have her father by her side.
This summer I had the opportunity to work as a student intern at the Center for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), based in Tunis, Tunisia. CAWTAR implements and executes various women’s rights projects sponsored by larger organizations, such as the U.N., IN-STRAW, the Ford Foundation, etc. It serves as an intermediary, mostly as a pan-Arab project coordinator between the project sponsor and the smaller NGOs that actually work directly with those who benefit from the project. It coordinates and sponsors research, training sessions and advocacy campaigns in Arab women’s rights.

I spent most of my time interviewing project coordinators about the different components involved in their projects and the nature of their work. I used the results of these interviews to provide assessments of CAWTAR’s English-language marketing materials, to see whether they were accurately portraying themselves to sponsors and researchers in Anglophone countries. I also interviewed department heads at the Center for Research, Study, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF), a related government-funded agency that performs similar actions as CAWTAR, and assisted another American intern with a research project on Arab women entrepreneurs.

Except when working with the English language materials, the majority of my communication was in French, and I was able to attend an advocacy campaign building training session for CAWTAR’s staff that was conducted in French, which was a great opportunity to get to know my very busy co-workers better. They were some of the most passionate people I’ve met, and are exceptionally proud of their involvement in Tunisia’s excellent record on women’s rights. I definitely made some life-long friends, who I miss already!

I also had a chance to tour the entire country by taking a short class at the beginning of the semester with Loyola’s political science department. Tunisia is an incredible place, with enormous diversity between regions despite its small size. I rode a camel in the Sahara, climbed (small, very small) mountains in the west, and climbed all over perfectly intact Roman ruins in the Mediterranean north, among so many other activities. Spending my summer in Tunisia was an incredible, eye-opening experience, despite the 115 degree heat. The pace of life (governed by the heat) was relaxing, but the Mediterranean culture nevertheless a lot of fun. The modernity was impressive, and being exposed and learning to understand the variances in their approach to women’s rights was one of the most enriching experiences I’ve ever had. I am very thankful I had this opportunity this summer, and I hope the exposure I gained being in the center of the Arab women’s rights movements will prove valuable throughout my entire career.
OTHER INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Shanghai, China by Noah Moss

Wei, ni hao. These were the first words I learned in a language that I would get to know during the three months I spent in China this past summer. The words are vaguely synonymous with an American greeting, and now feel hospitable and much less foreign. I learned the phrase in Beijing, China while studying abroad through the program Loyola offers at the University of International Business and Economics.

Our classroom time in Beijing was spent learning about international business transactions, comparative health law, international public law, and an introduction to the Chinese legal system. The afternoons brought a guided look at China’s capital and many of the historic sites around the city. Our group ventured out as well, visiting the ancient capital Xi’an, as well as Qingdao, a former German settlement in Shangdong province to the southeast of Beijing.

The next seven weeks of my trip would be spent working for the in-house legal department at Siemens, Ltd. in Shanghai. My work was a primer on international business transactions, and allowed me an intimate look at the unique challenges of conducting business in China. The highlight of each day, however, was the lunch break. At any one time, four languages were being spoken around the table, including German, Spanish, Mandarin, and English. Each day was an opportunity to pick up some essentials, especially in Chinese. What I was able to provide about English and American culture, my co-workers more than reciprocated on everyday life in Shanghai.

Much of my time in Shanghai was spent looking straight up. The skyline on the east side of the Huangpu River is filled with towering skyscrapers, a collection which shows no signs of slowing in its expansion. My internship brought me to the Majesty Building, an imaginative brick office building in Pudong financial district.

To me Shanghai is a tale of two cities, old and new. It is a city where modern feats of architecture are superimposed over a fabric of traditional neighborhoods. Traditional houses still stand from the days of the Chinese-British Opium Wars; now, however, they are surrounded by high-rise apartment complexes and a growing forest of office buildings. The contrast is emblematic of the balancing act that accompanies such an explosive economy, and the byproduct of consistent double-digit GDP increases, year after year. Reminiscent of growing pains, much of the economy is expanding faster than the body of governing laws can be developed.

It is a city that keeps even the most astute on their toes. A five minute subway ride is all that separates the Art Deco of the old French concession from the Pudong skyline, a scene resembling something out of a science fiction movie. A quick turn off of Nanjing Xi Lu (Shanghai’s equivalent of New York’s Fifth Ave.) and you travel back in time to Shanghai’s roots as a dynamic port city. The allure of this space-age city, however, lies in the rich cultural infrastructure and the close proximity of old and new. It is this juxtaposition that is symbolic of the growing struggle between an old heritage and new priorities, a struggle for balance that China will continue to face for generations to come.
OTHER INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Bil’in, Palestine by Lara Elborne

“Bil’in Habibi” = Bil’in my sweetheart

In an effort to take a break from learning practical legal skills, I took this summer as an opportunity to check some things off of my life’s “to do list.” I watched more World Cup games than ever before, learned (not enough) Flemish in Leuven, Belgium, studied reasonable amounts of health and IP law in Switzerland, and feasted on glorious Lebanese mezze in Beirut and Saida.

I also spent one month in Occupied Palestine on an educational delegation with a non-profit organization from Washington D.C. called “the Interfaith Peace Builders,” which leads delegations to Occupied Palestine several times a year for delegates from all over the world. We stayed with Palestinian families in various cities and villages in the Israeli Occupied West Bank and within Israel proper. Because there is really no way completely describe in one page the daily oppression Palestinians face because of this occupation, I will simply start with a place close to my heart: Bil’in.

Bil’in is home to 1,500 Palestinians. It is situated about 10 km west of Ramallah in the West Bank. I stayed for a few weeks with Iyad Burnat, his wife Tasaheel and their four children aged 4 – 12. Our days were slow: I learned to milk a goat or two, spent many sleepless, warm nights on the roof of Iyad’s house sharing ideas, drinking tea and telling stories with the entire Burnat family, and frequented the homes of local farmers to buy freshly slaughtered chickens and pigeons for our dinners. Bil’in, like all of the other cities in the West Bank, has been militarily occupied by Israel since 1967 and so, with every sweet moment that I spent in Bil’in, there existed a parallel reality, tainted by the occupation.

Milking goats, for example, was one of the only things left to do for Iyad’s family as their initial livelihood, which consisted of harvesting olive trees and making traditional Palestinian olive oil, was taken from them by the occupation. About five years ago, Israel started building a wall that cut through the middle of Bil’in. It put the villagers’ homes on one side and all of their farmland on the other side. Israel bulldozed all of the farmers’ olive trees in order to make way for the growth of their settlement Modin Illit. Now, when Iyad looks out over the wall, he no longer sees rows of ancient olive trees and the land his family has owned since before the Ottoman Empire. Instead, he sees the bright lights of fancy modern homes: 500,000 Jewish settlers live in colonies like Modin Illit all over the West Bank. The International Court of Justice issued an advisory ruling on the Wall in the West Bank calling its route illegal because
Palestine (cont.)

It effectively annexes large swaths of land to Israel from all over the West: this Wall weaves in and out of dozens of cities and covers 40% of the West Bank. Even the Israeli Supreme Court agreed, and yet the wall remains.

The beautiful conversations that we shared on the rooftops of Bil’in homes doubled as night watches to patrol for Israeli Army vehicles. Bil’in is so representative of the general situation in the West Bank that many major world leaders have traveled there to meet with the locals. The villagers have hosted the likes of Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter and Martin Luther King III. While Israel has ordered Palestinians to stop hosting internationals (often imposing the policy by way of banning foreigners from entering the town), many in the community resist, and consequently night raids are common in Bil’in. Israel regularly arrests and detains youth and community leaders, and fires tear gas and uses other weapons against the village; this summer, an American girl was blinded after an Israeli soldier fired rubber coated bullets that hit her in the eyes.

It is precisely realities like these that made this trip the best and worst of my life. On the surface, the memories are beautiful; the people are hospitable, dynamic, wonderfully proud and resilient. Underneath, every Palestinian has a story.