

September 14, 2018

Review of Study India Program

This program was definitely one of the greatest experiences of my life as it made me discover a new love for studying abroad and made me come to realize it in such a beautiful and diverse country. The Study India Program is set in Pune, a safe and simple city just a few hours away from Mumbai. We stayed in neat guest rooms on our university campus with daily cleaning services, warm water and air-conditioned rooms. Our classes were located right on campus, which made it easy to access especially since they started fairly early (7:30 am). We were given the option to choose from a wide selection of classes in our second week, which was nice since most participants in the program had such different interests. I especially enjoyed my sociology of gender and sexuality class as well as my colonialism in South America and Africa class. Aside from the on-campus lectures, SIP had organized for us multiple workshops that gave us much insight into Indian culture and heritage. The heritage walk during our first week was especially enjoyable as we had the opportunity to discover a lot about Pune's history and the Hindu religion. We also had workshops about Ayurvedic medicine, Vedic maths and bollywood dance that were exciting! I think it would have been nice if the organizers had asked for some input on what we wanted to do/explore ahead of time, but regardless, I can see that they put a huge amount of effort into making sure we were having many fulfilling experiences in India. Our breakfasts and lunches were delightful thanks to our on-campus chef, Jimmy and all of the cooks. I personally had no issues with food being too spicy or different. They tried to incorporate some Western-style food choices for our sake, but the Indian food was also great to experience. I think participants in this program will realize many lifestyles changes from Canada to India. In India, there isn't much free-time and the concept of work/school is very emphasized. Whereas in Canada, taking time off to relax and recharge is widely accepted and practiced. That was definitely something I had to adjust to, but it was interesting to be able to experience a change like that. I fell in love with the people here, the hospitality, the smiles, the smell of the food and the history. I would like to end this off by mentioning a few people whose hard work made this program as successful as it was. Sukeshi was very transparent and provided us with all the information and details we needed to get started in India on our own. Mrunal made sure all our needs were met throughout the program and was kind enough to invite us to her house for a one-on-one Indian cooking class. Akshay dedicated much of his free time ensuring our stay in Pune was a comfortable one, from taking us to get SIM cards to assisting us with our registration forms and I'm so grateful for his hard work and time. Anjali accompanied us to the Ajanta and Ellora caves and was a delightful woman with a kind heart that made the trip there and back a smooth one. I'm sure there are many more people I could mention, but overall everyone I met here in India will forever hold a special place in my heart and I definitely want to come back to Pune at some point in the future to reconnect with them.