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— Susan Coleman, Professor of Finance



In addition to touring several manufacturing plants, including Shanghai Volkswagen (upper left), students in the University's first study-abroad trip to China visited cultural sites such as the Great Wall of China (above) and the Forbidden City. At the National Stadium used for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing are, left to right, Sarah Upton, Gemma McWaters, Kelly Lovett, and Erin Cagianello.

Intro to Business in China

STUDY-ABROAD GROUP GETS FIRSTHAND LOOK

When undergraduate students Gemma McWaters and Kelly Lovett, along with graduate students Sarah Upton and Erin Cagianello, touched down at the Shanghai Pudong International Airport in Shanghai, China, last May, they became the first University of Hartford students to travel to China in a new study-abroad program created by Susan Coleman, professor of finance, and Andy Hao, assistant professor of marketing, at the Barney School of Business. All four students were enrolled in International Business and Globalization, a three-credit course designed to encompass the trip.

"I really felt that our students' education would be incomplete if they didn't have an opportunity to get some exposure to business in China, business practices in China, the economy of China, and the people of China," said Coleman, who traveled with the students. "It's critically important if you're a business person to know about China."

The launch of this study-abroad program comes three years after President Walter Harrison traveled to China with the goal of creating student and faculty exchanges between the University of Hartford and educational institutions in China. The initiative kicked off in fall 2009 when the University hosted Professor Hongwei Jin, a visiting scholar from the Shandong University of Finance (SUF). The following fall, five students from SUF began studying here as part of a yearlong academic exchange program.

The Hartford group visited the cities of Shanghai, Beijing, Suzhou, and Jinan. While in Jinan, they met Jin as well as four additional SUF students who came to study at the University this fall.

"We visited four companies, had two guest speakers, and had a number of cultural activities," said Coleman. The group toured several manufacturing plants, including Mercury Marine, Haworth,

and Shanghai Volkswagen. They also visited historic sites such as the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China, and Tiananmen Square.

"Study abroad really gives you that firsthand experience with another culture," says Cagianello, an MBA candidate. "We learned more than textbooks can possibly teach by being there."

"What surprised me the most was probably how clean the cities were. People were constantly sweeping the streets and collecting the trash," says McWaters, who noted that the cities provided both trash receptacles and recycling bins for public use. "I think it really shows that China is trying to decrease its pollution," she adds.

The students ate authentic Chinese cuisine, including fried rice and chicken feet. "Chinese cuisine is very different from American. In America we eat different cultures' foods, such as Mexican, Japanese, and Italian, for variety. In China each region has a different cuisine," says McWaters.

Because the inaugural session of this program fell short of its enrollment goal of 10 students, the group traveled with six business students from North Dakota State University. Coleman hopes to have at least 10 University students sign up for next year's 12-day trip, which will take place in May 2012. She is also working with the International Center here at the University to explore options for a semester- or yearlong program.

For Upton, an MBA candidate whose current employer conducts business in China, the benefits of the travel-abroad experience are obvious. "Business is no longer domestic versus international. It is a global interaction. Companies are learning what it means to be multinational—having to consider things like culture, language, government and political dynamics, religion, business practices—just to be a player in this realm at all." ■

On the Trail of a Missing Manuscript

While doing research on her dissertation in 2001, Joyce Ashuntantang, assistant professor of English in Hillyer College, discovered that the original manuscript for *Things Fall Apart*, the groundbreaking 1958 work by Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, was missing.

Achebe's novels introduced the world to African literature, eventually winning him the 2007 Man Booker International Prize. His primary focus has been the effect of imposed Western customs and values on traditional African society. *Things Fall Apart*, his first novel, is set at the time of the advent of missionaries and colonial government in his homeland.

To Ashuntantang, a native of Cameroon, West Africa, learning the plight of the missing manuscript has become a personal project.

"*Things Fall Apart* is no ordinary work. This is the text that ushered in modern African literature, and the manuscript serves many functions," says Ashuntantang. "The original manuscript, if found, is a treasured artifact in itself. In this day and age of word processing, it shows the journey covered. Achebe wrote this manuscript all by hand! He told me it took him two years to complete.

"In addition, it may help to reveal Achebe's thought process as he wrote. Although he told me that he was quite a neat writer and did not change anything, the manuscript may reveal otherwise. Even minor changes may prove to be important to literary critics and historians. The truth is, written literature depends on effective record keeping as a basis for new writing."

The mystery begins after Achebe gave the manuscript in the early 1970s to Thomas Melone, a Cameroonian professor of African literature then living in the United States. Melone, who died in 1995, led a fragmentary life, moving frequently within Cameroon and outside it, which may have contributed to the loss of the manuscript.

Ashuntantang has made two trips to Cameroon so far, one in 2009 and again this past summer, both funded in part by the University. Through Melone's daughter, Beatrice, she hopes to gain access to Melone's papers and documents, which the family is still gathering.

In 2008, Ashuntantang met and interviewed Achebe on the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Things Fall Apart* and asked him about the manuscript. Achebe replied that if the manuscript were found, ideally it should be kept in Nigeria. But he also acknowledged that it might not be valued by African libraries.

"The world has been deprived of a piece of history—the original manuscript. This sad fact points to a serious handicap in African literary studies and the collection policies of African national libraries. There is limited interest placed on important literary manuscripts and other relevant items like an author's correspondences." At the moment, some of Achebe's manuscripts are housed at Harvard University.

Whether this manuscript is found or not, Ashuntantang says the search will provide background for her course, Literature across Non-Western Cultures. Her trips to Cameroon have allowed her to network with African professors and students and compare



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—JOYCE ASHUNTANTANG

Joyce Ashuntantang, assistant professor of English in Hillyer College, teaches a course that includes *Things Fall Apart*, the groundbreaking 1958 novel by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe.

their reactions to Achebe's novel and others from African countries with the reactions of University of Hartford students to these same works.

Another project for Ashuntantang is developing a study-abroad learning experience for UoffH undergraduates at the University of Buea in Cameroon. Ashuntantang envisions students visiting classes there, interacting one-on-one with faculty, visiting cultural sites, and engaging in experiential and service learning to gain insights into the arts, politics, economy, and literatures of the people of Cameroon.

"As someone originally from Cameroon, I see this as a huge opportunity that will benefit students across the University," says Ashuntantang. ■