

Summer Internship Report 2017

Wint Thu, C'19

Hometown: Yangon, Myanmar



**Politics Research Assistantship:
Chinese Environmental Governance
Sewanee, Tennessee**

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

My research with Dr. Scott Wilson focused on studying citizen participation in the realm of Chinese environmental governance, testing the theory of shadow of the hierarchy. In doing so, I was responsible for mapping the data on water pollution, lawsuits and penalties on the provincial level, using the ArcGIS software. In addition, I was responsible for reading and summarizing papers and articles, as well as writing sections of literature review to be included in a paper and a book.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

Working closely with Dr. Wilson, an extremely organized and experienced scholar, provided me with an opportunity to learn how to conduct social science research successfully. During the course of the research, I have had an opportunity to read a good number of academic papers and articles relating to the field of research, and therefore my ability to perform close reading has vastly improved. Moreover, I also contributed to writing summaries of academic papers, as well as conducting analyses and extractions of relevant theories and information from papers and articles to be used in literature review. Having worked under the supervision of Dr. Wilson, who immensely helped improve my writing and understanding of the readings, I believe my ability to conduct academic writing has progressed during the research. In addition, I learned to operate the ArcGIS software for the purpose of the research we undertook, with tremendous help from Dr. Wilson and Dr. Van De Ven. This skill will be of great help to the independent research I intend to conduct in the future.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

The class I took on China's Environmental Crisis two semesters ago greatly helped with my ability to understand and contribute to various aspects of the research. In addition, I also helped solve different issues that arose with mapping the data.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

For the most part of the research, I was the only research assistant closely working with Dr. Wilson. Since Dr. Wilson supervised the work I did, it was important for us to coordinate and keep each other updated regarding the tasks every day. We learned to operate the GIS program using the handbook, and it was of great importance for us to cooperate efficiently in order to complete the study. I also learned the importance of consultation and cooperation in order to resolve the problems that arise during the research. For the last two weeks of the research, I worked with another assistant who joined us. From working on readings together to finding map trends, discussion was key for us. I learned that asking questions, appreciating different opinions, and finding common ground were pertinent components for successful teamwork in research besides cooperation and conversation.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

I have always enjoyed research in different fields of social sciences, and this research furthered my passion to pursue a career in research and academia. I will continue this research with Dr. Wilson throughout next semester, and will be conducting independent research of my own in the future. I aspire to pursue a doctoral degree in Economics upon graduation.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

My work took place on Sewanee campus, mainly in the Carnegie office and the library. The only people involved were Dr. Wilson and a fellow research assistant from China. I learned so many valuable things from both of them.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

I am very grateful for the funding which enabled me to learn so much in the field of research.