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Illinois Wesleyan Students to Study Abroad in England

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – During the 2009-2010 academic school year, two Illinois Wesleyan University students will study abroad in England. Chao Ren of Dongying, Shandong, China, a sophomore international student and history major, will study at Pembroke University as part of the Visiting Students Programme. Brandon Dorn of Glen Ellyn, Ill., a sophomore English literature major and economics minor, will study at Oxford University at St. Catherine's College.

While at Pembroke, Ren will take history lecture and tutorial courses. He discovered the Pembroke Visiting Students Programme from former participant, Sneh Rajbhandari '09. "It is a great opportunity for a history major to explore and experience the oldest university in the English-speaking world," he said. "I hope that through an intensive immersion in history I will be able to better understand where and how our world came to be."

Dorn will study at Oxford through Butler Institute's study abroad program. He chose Oxford University, St. Catherine's College in particular, because of his interest to live in a different environment. Dorn said that he hopes this experience will make him more comfortable as a citizen of the world.

He will study English as a main focus with a possible secondary focus in economics. Dorn hopes to improve his academic skills, specifically writing and research, at St. Catherine's College. "Oxford is known for being rather rigorous and demanding," he said. "I am looking forward to the challenge."

Ren and Dorn are not the only students affiliated with Illinois Wesleyan studying in England. Two IWU alumni are studying at Oxford, Megan Mondri '06, and Erie Roberts '06, who are working towards their graduate degrees.

Mondri, who was a history and English literature double major at IWU, studied abroad at Oxford during the fall of 2004 at Worcester College, Oxford, and while there, she discovered her love of England. After working in publishing for two years, Mondri decided to return to England to further her study of King James and British history. She is currently working on a master's degree in philosophy of modern European history at Oxford University.

Roberts also studied abroad at Oxford when she was an undergrad and knew that was where she wanted to do her graduate work, which is a one-year program as opposed to American master's degree programs that are generally two years. "Its education department is very good, and the policy in the UK regarding urban education is similar to the United States," she said. Roberts is currently working toward her master of science degree in higher education. She is studying higher education policy, philosophy, history, practice and theory. "My research," said Roberts, "is looking at the curriculum of a teacher education programme in London in order to see how well it prepares its student teachers to work in urban classrooms upon graduation."

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