

My exchange year in Shanghai, China at Fudan University School of International and Political Affairs

I had the opportunity to spend a year at Fudan University in Shanghai as part of the Double Degree Master's Programme between the University of Gothenburg and Fudan University. During my two semesters in China, I studied Chinese Politics and Diplomacy at the School of International and Political Affairs, an experience that allowed me to deepen my academic knowledge while gaining a nuanced understanding of China, its political system, and its role in the international community.

The programme consisted of courses in International Relations, Research Methods, Chinese Governance, and Chinese Politics, alongside Chinese language courses. Studying these subjects in China, rather than only approaching them from a European or Swedish perspective, was valuable as it gave me the opportunity to encounter perspectives and discussions that encouraged me to think more critically about how China understands both domestic and international affairs. Being surrounded by students and academics with different backgrounds also provided an environment where political and international issues could be discussed from a variety of perspectives. One of my academic achievements was writing my Master's thesis, which focused on China's climate policies and the European Green Deal. In my thesis, I examined the efficiency and coherence of these policies and explored how two different political and economic contexts approach the challenge of climate change. Conducting this research allowed me to place my interests in a broader context and further develop the research on China and the European Union, particularly in areas where cooperation and competition increasingly overlap.

Beyond the university, my year in China also gave me the opportunity to travel and experience the country's geographical and cultural diversity. During my stay, I visited provinces including Anhui, Yunnan, Fujian, and Gansu, as well as different cities and regions across China. Travelling allowed me to step outside the international environment of Shanghai and experience different parts of China. The combination of studying at one of China's leading universities, living in Shanghai, learning the language, travelling across the country, and meeting people from different backgrounds made the year both academically and personally transformative. At the same time, living abroad for an extended period taught me to become more adaptable and open to perspectives that differ from my own.

The scholarship from the Swedish School in Beijing was an important part of making this experience possible. The financial support gave me the freedom to focus on my studies while also having the opportunity to experience life in China beyond the university. Looking back, my year at Fudan University has further deepened my interest in China and in EU–China relations. The knowledge, perspectives, friendships, and experiences I gained during my year at Fudan will stay with me and influence how I approach international relations and my future career. I hope to use what I have learned to contribute to a better understanding between Europe and China and to continue working in an international environment where different perspectives can meet.

Manar Khudur