

Amanda Chisolm '16

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Undeclared Liberal Arts
Exeter, N.H.

What made you want to choose this course of study?

After I finished high school I took what was supposed to be a single gap year doing volunteer conservation work with endangered birds in New Zealand. At the beginning I had this notion that by the time I had finished traveling I would somehow know what I wanted to major in/do with my life. Instead, one year turned into two and a half and I ended up backpacking and bumming around both New Zealand and Australia, and I came home with my mind completely cluttered with new ideas and passions and about as far from decided about my future, as it is possible to be.

When I started at UNH I was originally going to declare as a wildlife biology major but at the end of my first semester the program got frozen and instead I switched out of the College of Life Sciences and into the College of Liberal Arts.

What stands out as your favorite course, project, or "learning" moment?

Some of my favorite learning moments have been in German — finally understanding things that German friends I encountered on my travels said to me, and in Ceramics — starting out clueless with a lump of clay and discovering not only a new ability but a delight in that ability that took me completely by surprise.

In my first two semesters at UNH I've taken a good mix of classes — Biology, Writing, Drawing, Anthropology, German, Ceramics, Poetry - and while maybe I should be concentrating more on selecting a major that will lead me to a career after school, I've decided to spend my time in college doing what makes me happy in an attempt to gather knowledge and skills that I really want to have and enjoy using rather than knowledge and skills that fit a job profile somewhere.

If you had to give advice to the next group of undeclared students, what would you tell them about getting the most out of your studies at UNH?

My advice to any new student at any college would be to not be afraid to explore, and to not feel stuck in one direction if it stops feeling like the right thing to do.

- WRITTEN BY:
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