

Kylie Boggs spent her fall semester at the University of Auckland in New Zealand as a Gilman Scholar and Peer Mentor with the UD World Scholars Program. Aside from guiding the new cohort of World Scholars, her primary focus while abroad was her Anthropology minor, especially since the University of Auckland's Anthropology program is ranked among the top 50 in the world. Of her three Anthropology courses, she achieved a "First in Course Award" for the senior-level class titled "Birth, Death, and Disease: Anthropological Demography". This means that she earned the highest final grade percentage in the course.

"Birth, Death, and Disease" examined how human populations change over time, what factors underlie patterns of disease and death, and why demography is so important to the study of epidemics. The course explored the use of demographic methods and theories of demographic and epidemiological transition to examine fertility, morbidity, mortality, and migration from an anthropological perspective, with a particular focus on infectious disease dynamics. This course also included an applied project - a historical, demographic analysis of the St. Stephens Cemetery in Parnell, Auckland. The information gathered and analyzed as part of this project will be of use to the Auckland Council and to future researchers, and may contribute to Dr. Heather Battles' presentation to the American Anthropological Association.

Picture: Kylie on Waiheke Island on trip to visit a local Marae

A Marae is a communal place built by and for the indigenous Māori, their families (whānau), or collections of families (Hapū). The term "Marae" itself actually only refers to the outdoor courtyard/grassy area of this meeting place, not the building itself, and the courtyard is often used for welcoming ceremonies or important events for that group. Once you are officially welcomed onto a Marae, you are always free to return without redoing the ceremony. We were invited onto the Marae on Waiheke island and into the meeting house (or Wharenuī) on that Marae in order to learn about the local culture and to acknowledge the contribution of the indigenous people to our host country experience, and it was absolutely astounding. Although the picture is not from the Marae or the Wharenuī themselves (that would have been disrespectful), it is from the same island.