Tija Iles - B.A. & Minor, 2016
Submitted by Gregory R Pflaumer on October 2, 2019 - 3:18pm

Tija works as a Reference Associate at the Pierce County Library System. The skills Tija learned in the Scandinavian Studies Department help her directly in her career in many ways. For example, she sees students from various backgrounds that need help doing research and writing research papers; her experience in Scandinavian Studies, a research-heavy department, is essential to her ability to help these students with their research. In addition, having studied Latvian has helped her by simply having knowledge of another language as well as knowledge of language acquisition. She can not only speak to the importance of foreign language collections to the library, she can also help to curate them. The library also serves a lot of immigrant communities, and knowing what it is like to be a language learner is essential to her job working with people for whom English is not their first language. Tija is very appreciative that minoring in Baltic Studies and Latvian was an option at UW, something she calls “an absolute treasure,” and “life changing for me.” The size of the Scandinavian Studies Department and of her Baltic Studies cohort provided friends, a home, structure, and support in a large university setting. Tija says the “opportunity to study the Baltics/Baltic language was so valuable for my life.” After completing her coursework, Tija received a stipend from the American Latvian Youth Association to work at the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in Riga one summer, in an attempt to connect American Latvians to the history of Latvia.