

Gilman International Scholarship Program



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During my study abroad, I was able to go to the edge of what I thought was possible with my education, and come back and talk about it. The Gilman International Scholarship allowed me to deepen my education experience beyond my wildest hopes. I was able to put down the books on anthropology and ecology, and hit the field.

I began my study abroad experience in India, trekking through the Himalayas. We climbed up to 15,600 feet in elevation in Darma Valley, watched a water-buffalo sacrifice during the Desseruh Festival, and searched for tigers in Corbett National Park. For seven weeks, our small team visited village after village, interviewing the locals and studying the ecosystem of the Himalayan range. I stayed in Thailand after the program, and studied the Thai language on my own. It was the fulfillment of a dream. I was able to step out of the classroom and become that adventuring anthropologist I had always wished I would be as a kid. Upon returning, I realized I was exhilarated and exhausted. I had seen and learned so much, but I wondered if I would ever remember it all or be able to recount it.

My Gilman Follow-on Service Project helped to ensure that I would never forget what I learned. For my project I lectured to freshman students at my university Honors College, gave a presentation in the study abroad office and created an online journal. The guest lecture I gave was for one of my professors in the Honors College, who was teaching a course on contemporary Chinese society. My first lecture was on the border conflict between China and India in 1962, explaining how border cultures in India have been affected by this even until modern times. In addition to these lectures, I gave a presentation with the study abroad office at my university for students about to leave for their study abroad. The diverse countries I visited, as well as the remoteness of my locations within those countries helped the students to put aside their worries. Lastly, I created an online journal on the website *Travelpod*. I uploaded snippets of my journals, photos, videos, and the audio from the two lectures I gave.

My experience overseas was life-changing. After graduation, I will look for jobs in Asia conducting development work. My study abroad experience helped me define how I want to live my life. I am very grateful for having had this opportunity, and will strive to express that gratitude by carrying this experience with me to share with others in my future work.

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