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Home State: Tennessee

U.S. Institution: Christian Brothers University

Major: History

Country: Jordan

Term: Fall 2004

My study abroad experience in Amman, Jordan has been the highlight of my academic career. It was an amazing opportunity that not only tested me academically, but personally and professionally. One of the most enjoyable activities I participated in came during the olive-harvesting season. I had the opportunity to aid a family in their harvesting operation, and learned how valuable a staple the olive is in the Arab diet. All of my experiences in Jordan have enriched my academic career in a way that classroom based education never could. The personal struggles I experienced while adapting to a new cultural have provided a foundation on which to build upon in the future. I have become a more patient individual, who is willing to explore the world and I apply the lessons I learn from different cultures academically, personally, and professionally.

As an individual I have grown both personally and academically. The impact of studying abroad was not necessarily felt while I was in Jordan, but only determined later in how my perceptions of the world have changed upon returning home. Shortly after returning to school from studying abroad I applied and was accepted into an internship program to conduct research in Uganda for two and a half months during the summer of 2005. The program is funded through the Fogarty International Center and the Office of Research on Minority Health of the National Institutes of Health. While in Uganda I will have the opportunity to conduct a Health Needs Assessment for Acholi refugees.

My experiences in Jordan made realize that I would like to continue learning about the various cultures, ethnic groups, and political entities that influence the international community. Professionally I would like to secure a job working in the international sphere whether through an NGO or, perhaps, through a position in the State Department or United Nations. To achieve one of these goals I recently took the Foreign Service Written Exam in the hope of qualifying for a position with the State Department. However, shortly after taking the exam I learned that I had been accepted into Seton Hall's John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations for graduate studies. At Seton Hall University I hope to obtain a Master of Arts degree in Diplomacy and International Relations. I firmly believe that my opportunity to study abroad with the help of the Gilman Scholarship aided my ability to have these opportunities made available to me.