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Set Flight to Morocco

February 28, 2018



One of the best opportunities available to college students is the chance to study abroad. Unfortunately, many students are unable to take advantage of these trips because the expense of travel is too great. To encourage all students to go abroad, the Gilman International Study Abroad Scholarship funds students from across the country in their travels. Honors Program student Nathan Carpenter (international studies, economics, and Arabic '20) recently received a Gilman scholarship to support his upcoming trip to Morocco to work on his Arabic language skills.

"Thanks to this scholarship, I will be able to travel to Morocco and practice what I have learned in my Arabic classes first hand. The Arabic curriculum has also included a strong focus on the socio-cultural background of the language, and the practices of the Middle East and North Africa region," he said.

Carpenter has studied Arabic for the entirety of his college career. He works closely with Professor Youssef Salhi,

lecturer of Arabic.

"Undeniably, Mr. Carpenter is an extraordinary young man, full of initiative and driven by unquenchable thirst for knowledge. His class participation and exams' results are most satisfactory and denote, on his part, a keen interest in the Arabic language and culture. It's also important to mention that Mr. Carpenter is a member of the Arabic Club at Georgia Southern University and has been involved in organizing many events on campus such as Arabic Coffee Hour and Arabic Movie Night," Salhi said.

Over eight hundred students applied for the Gilman International Study Abroad Scholarship and only three hundred were awarded. The Program gives students with limited financial means the opportunity to study abroad, while providing them with the necessary skills to maintain the United States' national security and competitiveness in a global economy.

This scholarship requires a unique task upon returning to the United States. Carpenter must create a follow-on project to inspire students in his local community to study abroad. "My project will entail keeping a detailed multimedia account of the Morocco trip, submitting stories to several local newspapers, and (hopefully) presenting at the fall 2018 Study Abroad Fair. I will also be sharing a presentation about my experiences abroad with a local high school," he said.

This year will mark Carpenter's first time leaving the United States. He has the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica with the Honors Alternative Break Trip, "Project Pura Vida." He will also participate in the Georgia Southern University language immersion program in Seville, Spain before studying in Morocco.

Other than the normal study abroad obligations, such as classes and field trips around the country, Carpenter finds it important for students to look into study abroad programs for many reasons. "For one, it makes all the pictures and facts you have seen and read in textbooks real. It puts everything in an authentic perspective. Also, the ability to travel abroad helps you become a better student academically, as well as an engaged world-citizen" he said.

The University Honors Program works with all Georgia Southern University students interested in applying for internationally competitive scholarships like the Gilman Study Abroad Scholarship.

Honors in Action: Linnea Ryan Wins Conference Poster Competition

February 28, 2018

Congratulations to Linnea Ryan (history '19) for winning the poster competition at last year's meeting of the SouthEastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG)! Ryan also has a minor in geography, and under the guidance of Dr. Amy Potter and Dr. Meimei Lin, professors of geography on the Armstrong Campus, she conducted research on historical markers in downtown Savannah.

Savannah is a popular destination in the southeastern United States, with its historic districts and a particular draw. In her presentation for the SEDAAG conference, Ryan focused on the historic markers around downtown Savannah and their underrepresentation of women. When asked about what she would like to see come from her research, Ryan noted the importance of shining a light on this finding. "Bringing recognition to this lack of representation is the first step in forging a path to a landscape in which the accomplishments of all people are celebrated, no matter their gender, race, or sexual orientation," Ryan said.

Dr. Potter and Dr. Lin both have glowing praise for Ryan and her dedication to this research. "I'm incredibly proud of Linnea. With some guidance from myself and my colleague Meimei Lin, she was incredibly proactive in developing her project. She took the initiative and ran with the topic," Dr. Potter said.

Dr. Lin, who has worked closely with Ryan on her research, says Ryan put in a great deal of time and effort into building a geodatabase and creating the map for her presentation, showing her dedication and work ethic. "I think the best part of this is that she was able to relate and apply what she learned in the classroom to study real-life problems," Dr. Lin added. "Throughout the process, she was actively engaged in the learning process."

Ryan is grateful for the many opportunities her professors and her geography research have provided her, from getting to experience the SEEDAG conference and meeting others in the geography field to working with Geographic Informational Systems (GIS), a tool that integrates a variety of data that can be used to determine geospatial patterns and solve geographic problems.

Ryan said her research leading up to the conference presentation "solidified my love for geography, a field I never expected to work in." She also did not expect to win the poster competition, but she is pleased to be putting the award money toward a study abroad trip to Russia this summer.

Ryan is an Honors Ambassador at the Armstrong campus and an active participant in the program's social and community service events. She was also one of three Armstrong State University students to participate in the Honors Consolidation Panel at the Southern Regional Honors Conference in 2017.

