

Below you will find proposed academic programs and personal statements for the Beinecke Scholarship.

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Personal Statement

When the Bookmobile came to my elementary school, I walked single-file with my class to the gymnasium, where I was permitted to choose one book from the hundreds laid about on tables. I pored over the bright covers until my teacher urged me to make a decision so that the class could reconvene. Quickly, I selected a colorful paperback titled "Fabulous Facts About the Fifty States," and I skipped to the final table, where a woman let me choose a paper shape. I chose a hot pink horse, and scribbled my name across it with a purple marker. She taped it into the front cover, and I joined my classmates. As the line leader preceded us back to the classroom, I hugged the book near to me.

Ten years later, while conducting research in a small village in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, I walked along a dusty pathway. It occurred to me that my childhood would have been drastically different had I grown up in this village instead of growing up in Alaska. My early hunger for reading would likely have given way to other interests like baking or baby sitting, and I may never have learned to read. Walking with a little girl clutching each of my hands, I remembered savoring the sensation of gratefulness that accompanied receiving a gift on a non-holiday.

One year later, I was working at the Library of Congress. As I turned the pages of Arabic newspapers, I took special notice of the monthly UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) supplements. I remembered Morocco, and it occurred to me that the establishment of a Bookmobile in Morocco would fall well within UNESCO's mission, and I knew the residents of villages in the High Atlas would be delighted to receive children's books. In my journal, I wrote, "I don't expect that Moroccan children would be as thrilled as I was to receive a book (as opposed to a new soccer ball, or special food, etc.), but I would love to promote education, literacy, and the richness of childhood." Reading was encouraged more in my American family than in many Moroccan families, nevertheless Moroccans understand that literacy leads towards opportunities, and I believe that any children can learn to enjoy reading. With a deficiency in books and waning interest in storytelling in Morocco, the future of education and the past of local folktales are both threatened, causing challenges for Moroccans. Challenges such as Morocco's illiteracy represent a global need for education.

To prepare for my career, I am majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies and Middle Eastern Studies and minoring in Linguistics and Arabic. I conduct research concentrating upon the Mediterranean Lingua Franca, a medieval language employed in sea ports that produced a unified Mediterranean society across cultural boundaries. Approaching written texts of Mediterranean Lingua Franca from the perspectives of history, linguistics, and anthropology, I seek a better understanding of the link between Mediterranean Lingua Franca as a language and the culture in which it was used. My senior honors thesis investigates the social, historical, and linguistic implications of the Mediterranean Lingua Franca.

After earning a B.A. at Emory University, I intend to pursue a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University's department of Middle Eastern Studies. This degree would provide me with a strong intellectual and academic background, while enabling me to pursue my interests of cultural

heritage preservation and international education and literacy. Aziza Bennani, Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO, as well as Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Morocco to UNESCO, worked and taught for twenty years at Mohamed V University in Rabat, Morocco. Her successful educational and government careers, preceded by a doctorate in Hispano-American Literature, inspire me to pursue my intellectual passions in higher education and also to aspire to a position in international government. Earning a Ph.D. would prepare me for a professional position in UNESCO and the general field of international education, and would provide the practical and theoretical tools that will ideally help me to facilitate cultural heritage preservation and international education and literacy.

I want to work to improve the daily lives of people in countries with high illiteracy rates. According to UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, there are an estimated 862 million illiterate adults in the world, about two-thirds of whom are women (UN). Progress towards literacy, though steady, is slow. One adult in five worldwide remains illiterate; in North Africa, 52.2 percent of women are illiterate (UN). Nevertheless, the work of UNESCO aids the international community in the crucial effort for worldwide literacy. Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General expressed concern on International Literacy Day 2002: "How can we build equitable information societies or thriving democracies if so many remain without the basic tools of literacy? How can intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding prosper when the literacy divide is so great? And how can poverty be eradicated when the roots of ignorance are left undisturbed?" (UN). Since the United States' withdrawal from UNESCO in 1983, UNESCO encountered difficulties in addition to standard UN challenges of budgeting and responsibility. On 12 September 2002, President Bush announced the United States' pledge to rejoin UNESCO, expressing a commitment to multilateralism, human dignity, toleration and peace through collaboration. I hope to serve as a representative of the United States to this unique and necessary organization in the interests of international peace, security, cultural heritage, and education.

Source:

United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics. "Literacy." Global Statistics 2 September 2002 http://portal.unesco.org/uis/ev.php?URL_ID=4926&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201 (20 December 2002).

Beinecke Application Personal Statement

I call myself an 'unlikely' explorer. Traditional exploration is defined by its focus on reaching a destination and coherently mapping the path toward that destination. Like a traditional explorer, I have a set destination: the academy. Unlike a traditional explorer, the mapping of my personal narrative does not fit into an easily defined track from the starting point of my life to the ending point of the present. My life and lived experiences of identity have been filled with many curves, discontinuities, and ruptures, but it is through my academic explorations of identity, (re)memory, and history as revision that I have been able to critically reflect upon my experiences and envision my destination of becoming a professor.

I intend to complete an interdisciplinary Ph.D in either the field of American studies (NYU or Yale), Rhetoric (UC-Berkeley) or History of Consciousness (UC-Santa Cruz). Given the nature of these fields to be governed less by the object of inquiry and more by the questions which generate and expose the intersections of disciplines, my interests in identity, social theory, and media critical studies can be developed by any of these interdisciplinary programs.

My specific research interests focus on theorizing the interconnection between language and the manner in which identity is discussed, defined, and developed within varying cultural contexts. I see my research as a chance to investigate the fluidity, discontinuity, and undefined ontologies and teleologies of subjectivity. By exploring representations of Black masculinity and sexuality in American popular culture, I have been able to give an intellectual grounding to the explorations that have enveloped my academic, social, and personal lives. The focus of my research has allowed me to transform my moments of self-reflection and critical introspection into a productive dialogue between the texts that I read, write, and explicate and the 'texts' of personal experiences that inform those readings.

Though I feel a certain sense of anxiety when faced with the prospect that my livelihood will be based upon the production (rather than synthesis) of knowledge, my academic experiences have been enriched by a rigorous course load and summer research experiences that have shown me that I am capable of thriving in an academic environment. I spent the summer after my freshman year participating in the Mellon Mays Summer Research Institute. During the institute, I developed a research prospectus for my senior project, attended seminars that discussed the graduate school application process, and presented a lecture on post-structuralist critiques of traditional identity politics movements. I garnered from this experience a sense that graduate school will provide me with a network of scholars and colleagues whose diverse interests will enable me to discuss in-depth the practices of knowledge formation.

In order to capitalize upon my experiences over the summer, when I returned to Emory in the Fall, I chose to take graduate seminars that focused on my areas of interest. Through the graduate seminars, I have been able to demonstrate my capacity to enter into the ongoing dialogues of my fields of interest and have been able to pose questions of how texts are situated within a particular socio-historical trajectory. For me, it is the advanced level of posing questions not simply of the text but how the text is mediated and constructed that is always interesting and engaging. In addition, I spent this past summer developing my research skills and awareness of my theoretical interests at Cornell University. At Cornell, I attended lectures sponsored by the School of Criticism and Theory (SCT), developed a research project, and presented a paper on spatial

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metaphors in theories of identity at the Leadership Alliance Summer National Symposium. These experiences have both increased my level of comfort in academic settings and allowed me to come to terms with a complex personal history that has shaped my experience of higher education.

The 'unlikely' element of my exploration is influenced by the ruptures of my childhood. Moving away from my friends in New York only to come to a small town in the south and a household filled with verbal, emotional, and physical abuse, coping with the divorce of my parents, enduring the incarceration of my father for fraud, and bearing the perpetual fear that my dinner may not be there when I returned home from school have created a set of discontinuities that make me appear as an unlikely candidate for success. Adding to these events the fact that I am a first generation college student makes my trajectory appear as if would end anywhere but the academy. But, it is the motivation for success in the face of obstacles that came from the unlikely source of my mother, a woman who did not graduate from college, that has inspired me to pursue a career in education. Though my mother could not give me a clear sense of what college life would be, the organic intelligence of lived experience taught her that education can be freeing not simply in the sense of economic empowerment but also in the broader sense of the freedom to think and explore one's passions and interests.

While the ruptures of my childhood have been integral to the development of my sense of self, I equally recognize that building friendships, relationships, and faculty networks has enabled me to bridge the gaps between the ruptures. Whether through emotional, intellectual, or moral support, the bonds that I have built with my family, friends, and professors have provided me with the inspiration and motivation to continue in my path to become a professor. Rather than understanding the life of the scholar as one of isolated research, I see my desired entrance into the profession as joining an ongoing dialogue that is produced by a community of activists, artists and thinkers who are developing and expanding the corpus of knowledge and praxes of political engagement. It is this idea of education combined with the lived reality of facing obstacles because of my race, class, and sexual orientation that has allowed me to appreciate the invaluable resources and opportunities that I have been provided. I see the Beinecke scholarship as an integral bridge along my journey of becoming a professor.

My research and travel experiences have led me to focus my personal and professional growth on the application of economic analysis and research to effectual and culturally sensitive development programs. I will continue my education by obtaining a PhD in Political Economy, because the top programs would allow me to specialize in economic development. After obtaining the necessary training I plan to work for either an Inter-Governmental Organization, such as the World Bank, or a Non-Governmental Organization, such as CESAL. I hope that such professional experience will give me the opportunity to focus on research in Central and South America, especially on microfinance, support to small enterprises, and development of cooperatives, and to then use the research to create effective programs that contribute to improving lives and furthering development.

Having these goals in mind, I have two main topics which I would like to research while in graduate school—worker cooperatives, especially the ability to use them as a method of poverty alleviation during an economic crisis, and the social and economic effects of worker migration. Having received a grant from the Emory Institute of Developing Nations, I will begin my research on worker cooperatives this semester while studying in Argentina. I plan to research the worker cooperatives that sprang up in Buenos Aires during the economic crisis of 2001. Through interviews, questionnaires and government data, I will collect information on both the cooperatives and conventional businesses in order to determine the economic competitiveness of the cooperatives to see if they could be used as an example in other cases of economic crisis because they helped to keep over 10,000 Argentines employed. Depending on the results I obtain this semester, I hope to further expand the project in graduate school by examining a greater number of the worker cooperatives in Argentina in order to determine the role of geography in their formation and competitiveness. I would also like to do a cross cultural comparison of the worker cooperatives in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela in order to determine the most successful characteristics and sectors.

My second topic of interest, migration and its economic effects, came about through a number of experiences that also helped me determine my passion—economic development in Central and South America. My interest in Central America began in high school when I volunteered for two months in a village in the mountains of Costa Rica. This interest deepened as I went back to Costa Rica in college with the same program as a project supervisor, which gave me a chance to see more of the region as I travelled weekly to four villages where I was in charge of a range of development projects, from building a water tank to painting a clinic. I was able to fully appreciate how much could be done with a small amount of resources and a group of people dedicated to helping improve their village. The experience of working with small groups of villagers to create positive change is at the root of my interest and dedication to economic development on a micro level.

While in Costa Rica, besides realizing my passion for working with micro development projects, I also observed a significant social phenomenon—almost every house was missing sons or fathers because they were working in the United States. I would like to explore the social and economic effect that this lack of males has on the village. Sophomore year I began studying a different aspect of this issue—researching the migrant workers who come to the United States to work, their impact and the kind of life they lead. I did this through the SIRE research assistant program, which matched me up with a professor doing research on undocumented immigrants and the guest worker program. Through the experience I also learned more about the process of doing research—different sources to use, collecting data, and creating excel tables for my professor's

manuscript, which have been important skills for my work as a research assistant this year, as well as for my independent work.

I continued to investigate the topic of migrant workers second semester sophomore year when I used my research on immigrant workers to explore the issue of remittances. I was interested in understanding how the effectiveness of the banking sector influences the ability of remittances to contribute to positive development growth in countries in which remittances comprise a high percentage of the GDP. Using the number of small and medium enterprises as a measurement of development, I found a positive correlation between quality of the banking sector and development growth in countries that receive a lot of remittances, while such a correlation did not appear in countries that do not receive a lot of remittances. My preliminary research suggests that a better banking sector is key to helping channel remittances towards development. Therefore in graduate school, I would like to take my experiences in Costa Rica and my research further to explore the economic impact of the remittances sent back by migrant workers, and how that impact could be made more effective in leading to development in the village. After in depth research, I would like to apply my findings by actually working to help increase access to the banking sector in rural areas of countries that receive a significant amount of remittances and establishing programs that use the influx of remittances to generate loans to help small enterprises.

My interest in economic research has also extended outside of the classroom as I have been drawn to organizations on campus that conduct research, such as SCEEN (Student Coalition Empowering Emerging Nations). Through my work at SCEEN, I have had the opportunity to do research for a variety of NGOs from the Malaria Foundation International to eStandards. Working for these organizations I have grown to appreciate the impact of their work, and I have realized I would enjoy working for a NGO after graduate school because NGOs can be effective in helping with development.

My ultimate goal after finishing my education is to work for an organization where I will be effective in implementing development programs that give support to sustainable micro enterprises and worker cooperatives and help to provide the necessary infrastructure to allow for these enterprises to arise. From my range of experiences, I believe the way to be most effective is through in-depth research investigation, because new research leads to new and innovative ways of tackling the problem of development. In graduate school, I hope to gain the necessary research training in economic development that will allow me to continue and expand the research I have begun now so that later I may use it to bring a fresh outlook and original ideas to current economic development programs.