

## STATEMENT OF PROPOSED STUDY

[REDACTED]

## Germany

The ability to comprehend and express a language is something many of us take for granted. We tend to forget that our knowledge of a certain language and syntax is only valuable when those around us share the same catalogue of words, expressions and phrases. As our world becomes more and more interconnected, and global communication and idea sharing become critical, we must recognize that human language is far more fragile than we may have assumed. I believe strongly in facilitating cross-cultural communication and hope to carry out for the 2006-2007 academic year a post as an English Teaching Assistant in Germany.

I embrace the challenge that teaching provides and have taken advantage of opportunities to hone the necessary skills. As a 3<sup>rd</sup> year teaching assistant in the Biology Department at Emory, I have spent countless hours working with students on difficult concepts, cooperating with professors, and of course diligently and swiftly making sure that administrative details such as correcting exams and tabulating grades go without hitch. Beyond the responsibilities mandated by our department, I make myself accessible to the students outside of the classroom to make sure that no student who wants to succeed is left behind the rigorous pace. Whether it be tackling the semi-conservative model for DNA replication or the way in which the two sub-units of a ribosome come together in preparation for m-RNA translation, Biology is in itself the study of a foreign language. My job here and in Germany, as I see it, is to nurture the understanding of a language for my students. Like the study of any language (including English) requires, the study of Biology mandates that one be able to communicate to others using the universally accepted terminology which rests on the fundamental dogmas of the discipline.

My experience as a Teaching Assistant has helped shape my ideas about teaching. My methodology for teaching Biology is a result of the advice I received from former professors on how best to learn and understand the subject. Numerous times I have been lectured to that the only way to truly grasp the science is to be able to verbalize it to someone else so that they too grasp it. The method lies on the assumption that there exists a vital relationship between teaching and learning. In weekly Genetics review sessions I lead, I walk students through problems, making sure to ask the question at each step along the way that drives the work of scientists worldwide, "Why?" I want to make sure not only that they find the correct answer, but most importantly that they understand how they find the correct answer. In Germany, I plan to push my students towards verbalizing the reasoning behind their work in English with the hopes that this exercise will strengthen their understanding of the fundamentals. Mindless memorization of sentence forms and grammar rules is as helpful as it would be to memorize a diagram from a Biology textbook; the true mastery of a discipline requires a far deeper understanding.

In the laboratory for introductory Biology I promote cooperation and discussion between group members as they work to design unique experiments to uncover fundamental principles of Biology. Teamwork and idea sharing is imperative to reaching goals in the world of science and the same holds true when learning a foreign language. I plan to encourage my German students to interact with one another, to prod their peers while working through language exercises and to discuss conversational topics normally reserved for their native tongue.

My experiences in teaching are not limited to hired posts. Even in classes such as Organic Chemistry I took on other students struggling to understand and worked in group study sessions in preparation for exams. As I would walk through my synthetic schemes for producing a molecule starting from a simple predecessor, the line between teacher and



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student became blurred beyond recognition. The verbal explanation solidified my understanding of the material and at the same time assisted my peers in their understanding. It was purely a symbiotic learning experience. Working with German students on their mastery of the English language will provide the same environment in which both parties will gain perspective as well as knowledge from the other.

In addition to tutoring, I have had other experiences that have helped focus my ideas about teaching. As President of the volunteer organization Peace by PEACE, my duties include organizing the curriculum and planning in conjunction with the local elementary school so that the program runs smoothly. When I took over the post my Junior year at Emory, I placed an early emphasis on deepening the relationship between student volunteers and their associated classroom teachers. A healthy relationship between instructor and volunteer facilitates the entire process and guarantees an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. My work with younger children has endowed me with several traits that are also applicable to teaching high school and college students. Patience, persistence and a sense of humor are indispensable when teaching young children, and I have found the same to be true when working with college students. The creation of a fun, interactive environment is something I strive for when working with students. This environment engages students and promotes a level of attentiveness that promotes retention of the presented material. Teaching can be frustrating, but the challenge is well worth the rewards. The positive role model I strive to put forth is with the hopes that all whom I work with will eventually possess the very same qualities. In Germany I will not only be viewed as an aide to the presiding lecturer, but also as an Ambassador ready to promote a positive image of Americans both inside the school and in the community around it.

My German Studies major at Emory has prepared me for a post as an English Teaching Assistant in Germany. From my rigorous coursework I have gained a solid foundation in the German language as well as the culture. In my four years at Emory, I chose courses that highlighted famous German literature as well as those that emphasized German history and its people. I am confident that my educational background provides me with the necessary language skills and knowledge of Germany and its culture to successfully fulfill a role as a Teaching Assistant.

In Germany I hope to apply all of what I have experienced at Emory. The invaluable and diverse opportunities I have had to work with students and teachers along with my heartfelt belief in the teacher/student duality will allow me to thrive in the classroom as an English Teaching Assistant. I look forward to establishing healthy and meaningful relationships with the German teacher to whom I am assigned and with the classroom of German students with whom I will have the privilege of working. Beyond the twelve hours of time I will be required to serve each week, I plan to encourage those students struggling with the course or those with a special zest for the English language to seek time with me outside of the lecture hall. I hope to be viewed not only as an assistant to the teacher, but also as a mentor and friend to the students. I hope to become not only an American college graduate working in Germany, but also an international scholar woven into the rich German culture that has enveloped my lust for the study of the language for over nine years.

Looking towards my future, I ambitiously see the importance of this experience. As the world becomes more and more connected, the ability to cooperate with others becomes of paramount importance.



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Germany

"Ach dash ist verrückt!" my Grossmama would exclaim in Swiss German, upon seeing what was my second bar of Swiss chocolate swiftly disappear. As a four-year-old boy these phrases were mere sounds, and although I could associate my Grossmama's sounds with excitement, with disbelief, it would be years until I will have studied enough German to be able to see that these humorous sounds were German and made perfect sense. As the only child in her family to have been born in America, my mother comes from a long line of Swiss blood dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. I can remember countless family gatherings in which Swiss German was spoken amongst the adults so that the virgin ears of my sister and I would be spared from the grown-up discussion. What began as a boyish attempt to crack the adult code surrounding my childhood has grown into a passion for the German language, culture, and the people of one of America's strongest and most respected European allies.

Nine years and the passing of my grandmother later, I am now able to sustain full conversations in German with my Swiss relatives. My journey began in high school where I diligently mastered the technical aspects of the language such as syntax, vocabulary and grammar, but it was not until my four years at Emory that my appreciation of the German culture flourished. I made sure to take literature courses that spanned from the Renaissance to modern day, culture courses that examined Germany's troubled past, robust present, and promising future, and even a course designed to outline the business infrastructure of the European Union's largest economic contributor. The completion of the Emory German Studies Department's Vienna program included the study of the great German composers of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras who pursued their illustrious careers in what at the time was the pulse of musical composition. Through the two Viennese culture and history courses conducted by Austrian professors I was given a first-hand impression of how a historically important nation to the Germans viewed their northern neighbor. My drive to orchestrate a multi-faceted approach to the German language and culture not only deepened my understanding and appreciation, but also sharpened my ambitions to find further avenues of German expression.

Vienna, however, was more than just a classroom. On every subway car, at every street corner, and in every coffee shop German permeated my ears not as the jumbled sounds of my Grossmama, but instead once and for all as a meaningful, distinguishable language. A childhood aspiration fulfilled, I am now able to plan and embark on the next leg of my German discovery: that of being able to make a personal mark in the lives of the German people in the form of a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant. The ability to comprehend and speak a foreign language is in itself an impressive feat, and the ability to apply this foreign language to something such as facilitating the learning of English for native German students even more substantial. My capacity to aid German students and their study of the English language is a sort of right of passage. Once attempting to learn the German language, I am now poised to aid others in their attempts at learning the English language. The development from curious child at a Swiss Fondue dinner to integral contributor to a German society is for me an amazing journey of self-awareness and of the notion that we live in an increasingly global society, and as such require an ever-growing arsenal of communicative tools.



## STATEMENT OF PROPOSED STUDY

Taiwan, English Teaching Assistantship  
English Teaching Assistantship

An English Teaching Assistantship in Taiwan will enable me to implement and improve the teaching and tutoring skills I have been honing for years while broadening and deepening my coursework as an undergraduate Asian Studies major. With the language skills and teaching experience that I gain, I aim to return to Asia in the future to work for nongovernmental projects focused on developing and improving education.

The first semester of my freshman year at Emory University I began tutoring at the Learning Center at Jerusalem House, a permanent residence facility for homeless families living with HIV/AIDS in Atlanta. Once a week I visited the Learning Center and worked with children ranging from age 3-13, playing educational games and tutoring them in reading, writing, and math. My interest in tutoring and teaching the children was based on my beliefs in the importance of education in furthering human development and the importance of giving back to one's community.

Two years later, when I started volunteering as an assistant English teacher at English as a Second Language night classes for immigrants, I translated many of the skills that I had acquired at the Learning Center to working one-on-one with Asian immigrants learning English. I played counting and rhyming games to help Nema, a Burmese woman, learn American coins. My basic knowledge of linguistics and the elements of a number of Asian languages helped me understand why Nema frequently confused the words "funny" and "penny," and gave me the advantage of being better able to assist her in mastering the sounds of English. Every night I went to assist in teaching the class, many of the students eagerly requested that I tutor them. Hien, a Vietnamese immigrant, told me that he learned "a lot more" from our individual sessions than from the class. In Taiwan, I look forward to implementing the tutoring skills I have acquired to work individually or in small groups with students, inside or outside of class.

When I taught English to Tibetan orphans in Lhasa, Tibet, this past summer through a service-learning grant I received from the Center for International Programs Abroad at Emory, my facility with the Tibetan language enabled me to better help the children struggling with English sounds and constructions, though I ultimately discovered that speaking their language was not necessary for teaching English. In class, it was an appropriate challenge for the 10-year-old children to be instructed in only English, and the 6-year-olds benefited from my ability to make use of body language, pictures, and drawings to communicate my lessons. Dancing and acting out verbs and nouns stimulated and entertained my students, eliciting many smiles.

Having no formal training in English language instruction and an ever-changing schedule at the orphanage challenged me to think on my feet in class. When the fifty children in grades one and two were unexpectedly combined for class one day, I had to quickly formulate a lesson plan appropriate for both grades. A spelling contest involving both words and pictures turned out to be the perfect solution. My challenging moments teaching at the orphanage also turned out to be the most rewarding.

During the last weeks of my stay in Lhasa, a local hotel owner connected to the orphanage heard of my position teaching English and asked me if I might give a few lessons to his staff. In return for vegetarian dumplings, I taught a dozen workers at the



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Taiwan, English Teaching Assistantship  
English Teaching Assistantship

hotel basic vocabulary and common phrases related to hospitality, giving them the confidence to interact with the English-speaking majority of guests at the hotel. At the end of my teaching sessions at the hotel, the workers draped a score of *khata*, or ceremonial silk scarves, around my neck as a sign of gratitude.

Living in Lhasa gave me a deeper understanding of many of the topics that I have studied in class at Emory and wish to continue studying in Taiwan. In particular, I am interested in learning more about Buddhism as it is practiced in Taiwan by conducting a casual comparative study of Tibetan and Taiwanese Buddhism. The Tibetan expression of Buddhism is a fascinating example of how a culture adopted and adapted a religion and philosophy foreign in origin, blending it with its own culture and indigenous religion. Similarly, Buddhism as it is practiced in Taiwan is syncretistic, incorporating Buddhist, Taoist, and folk beliefs into a unique form of the religion. Moreover, increasing numbers of Taiwanese Buddhist practitioners are turning to Tibetan masters for teachings, providing additional incentive to understand Taiwanese Buddhism in relation to Tibetan Buddhism.

My coursework at Emory and experiences living abroad in Asia have prepared me to undertake this comparative study of religion in my time outside of my work as a teaching assistant. By applying my understanding of Buddhism and Buddhist cultures to my visits to Taiwanese Buddhist temples, observation of Taiwanese Buddhist practices, and conversations with Taiwanese Buddhist practitioners, I will be able to enrich my stay by learning about Taiwanese culture in a way that bridges my past studies with my interest in furthering my knowledge about Asian religions and cultures. Though I do not yet know Mandarin, participating in and observing Taiwanese Buddhist rituals and ceremonies, noting the ways in which Taiwanese Buddhism influences Taiwanese culture, and talking with individuals at the school and English-speaking locals will create a framework that will allow me to interact with and understand better the Taiwanese community in which I will live and facilitate meaningful exchange between my host community and me.

The knowledge that I acquire learning about Taiwanese Buddhism is crucial to expanding and deepening my understanding of Asian religions and cultures more generally. In turn, a solid basis of knowledge about Asia is necessary if I wish to continue to work there. With the experience that I gain teaching English to Taiwanese children and the acquisition of basic Mandarin that I aim to gain in Taiwan, I hope to improve my teaching skills and expand my knowledge of Asian cultures so that I can return to Asia to work long-term for nongovernmental organizations addressing education. While it is too soon to say which organization I will work for in the future, it is certain that I am committed to my role as a global citizen in facilitating positive change in terms of education in the world.



## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Taiwan, English Teaching Assistantship  
English Teaching Assistantship

While I was growing up in Boston, my father liked to quote to me the Transcendentalist philosophers who had once lived in the city. As he rattled off lines from books and speeches written by philosophers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, I absorbed the messages of the men and women who had committed themselves to literary, spiritual, and social change. My convictions about engaged scholarship and service were initially shaped by Emerson's essays, in which he urged individuals to take action in the world and help others by enabling them to help themselves. I agreed with his notion that all things were interrelated and understood that interrelation obligated individuals to work together and help one another.

Henry David Thoreau's writings on Hinduism and Buddhism exposed me for the first time to Asian cultures and religions. Having read Thoreau's brief translation of the Buddhist *Lotus Sutra* in my early teenage years, I quickly moved on to devouring many of the books in my high school library covering Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Confucianism. When I arrived at Emory, I immediately knew that I wanted to continue studying Asian religions and cultures. In the classes that I took I visited local Hindu and Buddhist temples and learned to understand the topics about which I had read as they existed in the real world. Outside of school, I joined Students for a Free Tibet, a group of which I had been a member in high school, and became president of the organization in the second semester of my freshman year. I had always felt that one must give back to the causes one studies and in which one is interested.

In the spring of my sophomore year, I traveled to Dharamsala, India, on the Emory Tibetan Studies Program to learn more about Tibetan culture and religion. While abroad I came to understand how Buddhism influenced every facet of Tibetan society, including the Tibetan freedom movement, which embraces the principle of non-violence. Impressed and fascinated by my experience in Dharamsala, I was eager to return to Asia as soon as I had left.

When I arrived home, I began volunteering with Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders) to assist in teaching English to immigrants in Atlanta. At the same time that I was working on learning Tibetan language, I wanted to gain the skills to share my own language with others interested in learning it. I picked a program that focused on teaching Asian immigrants because I was eager to interact with individuals from the countries that I had studied. The techniques I learned while working with the immigrants later helped me when I taught English to orphans in Lhasa, Tibet, this past summer. The basic grammar lessons and language games that I had mastered teaching and tutoring students in Atlanta transferred well to my classes in Tibet. When, as a parting gift, my Tibetan students gave me a Buddha pendant wrapped in notebook paper, I knew that I had succeeded in reaching through to them.

As I enter the final year of my studies at Emory, I see my Asian Studies coursework and volunteer efforts as a springboard for my future endeavors. I wish not only to continue to learn about Asian cultures and religions by traveling to parts of Asia that I have not yet visited, but also desire to give back in meaningful ways to the cultures in which I am interested. An English Teaching Assistantship in Taiwan will allow me to accomplish both aims, enabling me to teach and learn, give and receive.



Statement of Grant Purpose  
, Germany  
English Teaching Assistant

If awarded a teaching assistantship in Germany, I would apply the lessons I learned as a student to the lessons I would give as a teacher. I have fresh memories of what engaged me and what bored me in the classroom, and I plan to use my own experiences learning German as a blueprint for creating effective lesson plans in English. My background in linguistics provides me with a deeper and more conscious understanding of the English language than that possessed by the average native speaker, and my background in vocal performance provides me with greater communicative skills. I plan to combine my specialized knowledge in linguistics and my extensive musical background to create interdisciplinary lesson plans that are based on active, contextualized learning, and I believe my varied experiences as a teacher, musician, linguist and student make me the best possible candidate for this job.

As a counselor-in-training and as a lifeguard and swim instructor, I have taught with my hands as much as my words, and I find that hands-on learning is as effective as it is fun. I hope to apply this interactive style to the classroom as well by designing activities that allow students to express themselves in multiple ways. Though every student learns differently, I believe that an interdisciplinary approach incorporating skits, music, and writing will offer something for everyone.

As a singer, I often study repertoire in foreign languages, paying very careful attention to pronunciation—for a song to sound authentic, its diction must be clear and easy to understand. To train my ear and my accent, I record each of my voice lessons and study the playbacks later. As a teaching assistant I would incorporate this idea of recording and playback and use it to measure students' progress in pronunciation. I would also use songs themselves as a teaching tool—there are some very simple, yet beautiful songs by Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, and Johnny Cash that would be easy for me to play and even easier for the students to sing along to. Singing "This land is my land" together as a class would be an opportunity to discuss everything from American politics to American music and of course, would also introduce new vocabulary.

As a linguist, in addition to core courses in phonology, syntax, and language change, all of which give me an in-depth knowledge of the structure of English, I also had the opportunity to take electives in sociolinguistics. The course "Bilingualism and Multilingualism" was particularly eye opening in its criticism of the *ideology of a standard*, or the idea that there is only one correct way to speak a language. Every language is filled with different dialects, accents, and even grammatical forms, and favoring one over another does not do justice to the richness of a given language. As a teaching assistant, I would ask each student about the particularities of their variety of German and then lead a discussion about different accents of English as well as stereotypes associated with them, in an effort to increase cultural understanding and awareness.

As a foreign language student, I know how daunting it can be to jump from passive learning to active use of a new language, and I would incorporate daily use of English from the start. For instance, I would encourage students to write short daily journal entries in English as a way of integrating grammar lessons in their own writing. If we were studying the past tense one week, I might ask the students to write a journal entry that used the past tense three different times. By implementing abstract grammatical concepts in their own writing, students would begin to understand the grammar on a more concrete, practical level. Instead of arbitrary



## Statement of Grant Purpose

University of Applied Sciences, Germany

English Teaching Assistant

vocabulary lists, I would give students a context in which to learn new words. Drawing vocabulary from film excerpts or newspaper articles would make it easier to remember and learn and would also integrate it with cultural knowledge.

German and English are reassuringly similar in some ways and deceptively similar in others—having struggled myself with false cognates, verb order, and the conditional tense, I feel prepared to help German students navigate the same pitfalls between the two languages. Learning a new language can be frustrating and teaching can be frustrating, but having done both, I know that the payoff is worth it. I believe good teaching is the result of good communication and active collaboration, and I would constantly strive to make learning English as engaging and interesting as possible. I would work with my students, not above them, to help them learn (and ideally, come to love) English, and I am sure I will learn as much from them as they will from me.

Such a unique opportunity of being both student and teacher is one I plan to take full advantage of—though my primary responsibility would be teaching, I also expect to be learning a lot, whether it is from my colleagues and students or from a more formal setting such as a university course. In fact, I believe that not only do I have more to offer as a teaching assistant in Germany than I do in any other country, but that the reverse is true as well—Germany has more to offer me than any other country. Some of the world's most famous philosophers and composers are German, and I can only hope to fully appreciate the work of Wittgenstein or Wagner if I understand the context (and language) in which it was created. Therefore, in addition to German language classes, I plan to enroll in literature and music history classes at a local university. In fact, I believe pursuing my own studies at a local university will complement my teaching of English by constantly reminding me of what it is like to be on the other side of the desk. Furthermore, living in Germany and taking classes in German will bring me closer to my ultimate goal of fluency, a goal I have had in mind ever since I learned to say "Hallo, ich heie Alessia. Wie heit du?"

As an Italian-American, I am lucky to have first-hand familiarity with two cultures—a background that has provided me with a heightened sensitivity to differences between Europe and the United States. As a Fulbright scholar, I would welcome the responsibility of bridging these differences, and hope to represent the most positive aspects of American culture: its dedication to excellence in education, its generally optimistic attitude, and its unending enthusiasm for new experiences. I plan to obtain a PhD in linguistics and find a position as a professor of sociolinguistics at an American university, and a teaching assistantship in Germany would be an important first step towards this career. This step is one I want to take not only because of what it can offer me, but also because of what it will offer others, namely, my future students. I believe that communication between two countries should involve more than learning each other's language; it should be an exchange of cultures, customs, and traditions, with the aim of fostering mutual understanding and respect. As a musician, a linguist, an Italian, an American, and I hope, a Fulbright scholar, I feel ready to take on the challenge.



## Personal Statement

Emory University, Germany  
English Teaching Assistantship

I was singing German long before I ever spoke it. As a classical voice major, I learned early on that the “holy trinity” of languages to be familiar with (if not fluent in) is German, French and Italian. A bilingual Italian/English speaker and a fluent speaker of French, it was German that I struggled with the most. I tripped over the crazy consonant clusters, stumbled over Eszett, and searched vainly for the verb at the end of each sentence that would make sense of it all. Forget about trying to sustain a closed umlaut sound over a high note! After trying (and repeatedly failing) to memorize one particularly wordy song by Schubert, I thought: “Enough. The only way to do this is to know what I am actually singing about.” And so I enrolled in German 101. Little did I know that from there I would travel to Vienna, add a major in linguistics, spend a semester in Amsterdam and I hope, a year in Germany teaching English.

German was not easy to learn but I persevered, growing to love not just the language but the process of language-learning as well. What used to seem like code slowly revealed itself to be an extremely logical and beautiful, if different, way of communicating. After two semesters of German in the classroom, I decided to study abroad in Vienna, looking forward to the opportunity of living with a host family and being fully immersed in a language I had only dipped my toes in. Vienna was like a huge language lab, and I found that carrying around a small notebook for the unfamiliar words I encountered was an effective way of committing them to memory. Most of the entries in the notebook were food words—the coffee culture of Vienna was rich with new and interesting vocabulary, and I decided that the best way to learn it was to use it—by ordering every coffee drink on the menu.

While in Vienna, I wrote numerous short essays in German as part of classroom assignments and also kept a journal—just one or two sentences—of what I did each day. I quickly realized two things: one, that trying to translate English thoughts to German words was frustrating and ineffective, and two, that even a little bit of writing made a huge difference in the way I understood grammar and syntax rules. Thinking of something in German was the only way to write it in German, and I started noticing how the language subtly shaped my thoughts. I became a slightly different person in German than I was in English, and I began to question how the language I spoke was affecting the way I thought and even the person that I am. When I returned to Emory, I explored this question further with several classes in linguistics, eventually adding the subject as a second major.

I was naturally interested in the subject not only because of my passion for languages but also because of my bilingual upbringing—my mother spoke Italian to me as a child and I grew up using it as fluently as I did English. Yet communicating in Italian with my family but not my friends was strange—it was as though I lived in two worlds that were parallel but not connected. As a linguistics major I was finally able to give names to some of the experiences I had growing up, and I have since become intensely interested in the intersection of language and identity and the ways in which the two mutually shape each other.

If awarded a Fulbright grant to teach English in Germany, I would welcome the opportunity to continue exploring this question, welcome the opportunity to discover who I am in German and who my students can become in English. Language learning is above all else a dialogue, and I hope to listen as much as I speak and to learn from my students as much as they learn from me.



## STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

Nepal, Psychology

The Lama and the clinician: Teachers and/as therapists in Tibetan Buddhism

Currently a large number of Tibetans risk their lives to flee their native land. Upon entering Nepal after enduring years of religious persecution and a tumultuous journey across the Himalayans, many of these individuals suffer from what Western psychiatrists would classify as post-traumatic stress disorder. In most cases, these individuals immediately visit a lama after their passage rather than call on a psychologist. Tibetan Lamas play a central healing role in their local communities; however, the prevailing role of Tibetan spiritual leaders as therapists has been neglected by researchers. I propose to study whether lamas play a role similar to Western psycho-therapists and to document their treatment methodology.

For individuals seeking psychological assistance, a lama may offer anything from material blessings to ritual exorcisms. Locals may come to a teacher with questions dealing with their everyday business or social interactions. For these situations, lamas oftentimes perform divination (*mo*) or give advice. Many of the reasons for visiting a lama are analogous to the reasons for visiting a therapist in Western culture. As with therapist interactions, individuals may see a particular lama regularly or only when they have a problem, and may even attend with skepticism. It is very common for a lama to look within others' or their own dreams for counsel. This project will focus on Dream-work, a prominent tool in the lama/patient interaction, as an ideal case study of Buddhist therapeutic intervention.

In the cases of Buddhist practitioners, dreams can be utilized as a method for self-growth. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, a prominent Bön teacher renowned for Dream-work, asserted that with conscientious, lucid dreaming one can eliminate negative emotions and karmic traces. Dream-work is a significant method for self growth and psychological health in the Tibetan Bön and Buddhist traditions. Similar to these examples, lamas will oftentimes use dreams for analysis, prophecies, and to overcome obstacles in the mind.

Dream-work is an excellent model for illustrating lama's therapeutic role, as it is commonly accepted as a therapy in several schools of Western psychology. Western psychologists are also employing Buddhist practices into their own therapies. In a modern variation of the Tibetan Buddhist practice of Dream Yoga, Stanford University's Stephen LaBerge, an expert in Dream-work, has shown that lucid dreams can be used as a powerful tool to assuage mental health issues, especially for traumatic experiences or phobias. Both Western and Tibetan cultures use Dream-work in a therapeutic sense.

My research will consist of participant observation of the lama-visitor interaction and semi-structured interviews with the lamas, their disciples, and guests. Some examples of questions I will be pursuing are: what guidance do lamas impart, do the consultees report benefits or transformations, and what is the significance of Dream-work in Tibetan Buddhism. I will



interview several lamas from varying traditions and lineages, as well as observe their audiences with visitors. I have secured an affiliation with the Rangjung Yeshe Institute (Kathmandu University). Professors have shown support and offered assistance for my project.

During my independent research project through Emory University, I constructed a comparative model between the commonly accepted Western psychiatric diagnostic tool, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, and Tibetan psychiatry. This project was focused on the medical aspects of Tibetan psychiatry. With the Fulbright grant I will continue with and broaden aspects of this research while analyzing the less examined perspective of the lama via the psychotherapeutic route. During this anthropologically based project, several lamas let me observe their private meetings with visitors, including the Bön-po teachers Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, his teacher Lopon Tenzin Namdak, and the Buddhist teachers Lama Tsering Wangdu, Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche, and Chamtrul Lobsang Gyatso Rinpoche. All are adept practitioners of some form of Dream-work. Throughout the course of this project, I intend to observe these teachers interactions with visitors as well as form new relationships with other lamas.

All the lamas I will speak with have assigned translators; therefore fluency in Tibetan is not required for this project. Nevertheless, to lessen the communication gap I intend to supplement my prior colloquial Tibetan language studies by attending courses at Kathmandu University and seeing a private tutor. As a student at Kathmandu University, I will also attend lectures on Buddhist philosophy led by Chogyi Nyima as well as other traveling lamas.

My background in meditation research under Dr. ~~Charles Raison~~ makes me aptly qualified for this task. ~~Charles Raison~~'s research is unique because it was one of the first to implement Tibetan compassion as a preventative therapy against stress and depression. Dr. ~~Raison~~'s research not only illustrated the application of compassion meditation on mental aggregates, it also created a gateway for future studies, like this one, on the therapeutic application of other meditative practices.

As several lamas pass through the monasteries in Nepal in rotations, this study will take the full 10 months to complete. From this research I intend to create a better academic understanding of mental health issues and their resolve in Tibetan Buddhism. This project will shed light on the therapeutic role of Tibetan spiritual leaders and the types of treatment they offer. It would also allow for future comparison between Western and Tibetan Dream-work.



## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Nepal, Psychology

My academic studies may seem paradoxical—I am carrying a double major in Neuroscience and Religion. I am intellectually drawn to Eastern and Western contemplative practices and intrigued by the mind-brain relationship. These seemingly diverse facets of my life arose some 10 years ago when I first discovered meditation. I cannot pinpoint the exact events that led me to learn this practice, but it helped focus my spiritual yearning and encouraged a passion to further understand the inner workings of the human mind.

During my first semester at Emory, I became immersed in studying meditation as a psychotherapeutic modality while working as a research assistant for Dr. ~~Charles Raison~~. The principal aim of our research was to assess the effects of compassion meditation (a practice with roots in Tibetan Buddhism) on individuals' responses to physiological and psychological stress. The results suggested that regular meditation practice could significantly influence not only mental state, but also physiological responses. Intrigued by these findings, I sought to advance our understanding of these observations and address some of the problems with the first study in work that would later become my senior honors thesis project.

As my research into the science of secularized meditation progressed, I was inspired to further my understanding of its foundations and practical applications through an independent research project studying meditation and other aspects of Tibetan Buddhism in Dharamsala, India. Under Dr. ~~Raison~~'s guidance, I studied Tibetan psychiatry through shadowing experiences with Tibetan physicians and lamas. Over the course of my semester long independent study, I conducted informal interviews, gathering anecdotal data and observing hands-on application. Through this experience I was introduced to many different types of meditation and innovative strategies, which have the potential to be applied to physical and emotional healing.

During my senior year under Dr. ~~Raison~~'s advisement, I developed a novel methodology utilizing a computer-based stressor to elicit a longitudinally reproducible stress response in study participants. While our stressor of choice was found to be accurate and repeatable it was determined to evoke much weaker stress responses compared to the stressor used in our previous studies. Due to this limitation we were unable to apply the variable of meditation practice to this model system; however, in addition to the laboratory modeling of stress responses, I also wished to further characterize certain psychological attributes of study participants; specifically spiritual meaning and mindfulness as I hypothesized these parameters were significantly influenced by meditation practice. Surprisingly, in the preliminary studies we found strong positive correlation with both mindfulness and spiritual meaning to the individuals' stress levels.

Following the conclusion of my Honors thesis, rather than immediately graduating, I decided to extend my studies and take advantage of the vast international programs offered by Emory University. This decision guided me to Australia where I am engaging in courses on philosophy of the mind and the science of religion. In the future, I intend to become trained as a clinical scientist of psychology, practicing both therapy and research with the integration of meditation. Returning to Nepal to continue research on Tibetan culture, psychology, and medicine would capstone all of my former research experiences and strengthen my understanding of holistic mental healing.



## STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

~~Vincent~~, United Kingdom, Acting  
Study and Practice of Physical Theatre and Acting

page 1

This is a proposal to receive the funding necessary to attend The University of Exeter, U.K. with the goal of completing a one-year Master of Arts degree in Theater Practice. My course of study will focus on physical actor training. A specific goal of this proposal is to study psychophysical acting as taught by Exeter's Professor Phillip ~~Zarilli~~, a leading expert of this method. The training in psychophysical acting offered in this program is a perfect fit for me, as it would further the training and methods I use as a producer and practitioner of theatre arts in the U.S. The grant period would cover one academic year in residence at Exeter and would begin in October of 2009. If possible, I intend to stay at Exeter for a second year and complete a M.F.A. degree. Funding for the possible second year is being sought from other sources and would not affect this proposal.

One of the main components of Exeter's masters program is the taught course work. Core classes in Research Methodology, Intercultural Actor Training, Psychophysical Actor Training, and Psychophysical Acting in Practice maintain a baseline of the program. The other essential components of the program are the opportunities provided by production, lab, and workshop schedule. These components represent the practical application of the core of taught material. From this base, each student's creative and intellectual development is advanced through a careful combination of group practice, individual practice, and theoretical reflection. Through our correspondence, Professor ~~Zarilli~~ has confirmed my strength of candidacy for this program and we have begun discussing foci for the Individual Practice modules in terms of furthering my current proposal goals. All coursework, production, lab, and group work, as well as the final dissertation, will be completed in one academic year.

As mentioned, a primary goal of this proposal is to study psychophysical acting under one of its leading developers. Over the past several years Professor ~~Zarilli~~ has developed physical training methods that I will learn and incorporate into my own. His methods are drawn from traditional Asian disciplines of body-mind training as well as ideas and principles laid down by Constantin Stanislavsky, Jerzy Grotowski, and Antonin Artaud. From this he has created a unique set of psychophysical exercises and training methods that teach focus, concentration, discovery and use of inner energy, and body mind integration. These techniques help the performer focus on the breath, and movement integrated with and through breath. What is crucial is the process of transposition of these elements and principles into acting process. This process can allow the individual to access a fuller, 'deeper' relationship to actions/tasks in performance.

I currently run a training curriculum for the performers of my theater company, Out Of Hand Theater. This training includes rigorous work in conditioning, control, focus, ensemble building, and original creation. These methods are highly successful and have garnered regional and national recognition and praise. However, I seek an approach that creates a direct connection between physical movement and emotional state as well as between actor and text. I plan to take my current training methods even further by finding a way to use intense physicality to access the emotional life of a character, and to deepen relationships on stage. This is the necessary addition to my training that I will learn through studying psychophysical theater with Professor ~~Zarilli~~.



## STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

~~██████████~~, United Kingdom, Acting

Study and Practice of Physical Theatre and Acting

page 2.

The University of Exeter's M.A. program is particularly suited to professional practitioners, like myself, who wish to advance their current practice and have a supportive environment to reflect on their creative process. The acting program is geared toward individual direction. The program focuses on combining theoretical and reflective aspects with individually designed creative work in the specific areas of practice. For me, this would be incorporating Exeter's psychophysical training into my existing methods in an effort to reach a fuller understanding of mind, body and text relationships. In addition, the M.A. program at Exeter promotes putting theoretical and academic ideas into practice. This would encourage my development of a new system of physical actor training. This incorporation of psychophysical actor training with the extensive physical actor training I already have, and subsequent combination of these methods into a new system of training is the educational goal of this proposal. This will be the main thrust of my dissertation.

As the primary actor, leader, and teacher in my company it is important for me to further and better my own personal artistic skills and to do so in an environment that is both academic and practical. Through the completion of this one-year MA program at the University of Exeter I will experience an immersion in psychophysical disciplines and gain an academic/scientific understanding of these approaches to acting and performance. The academic environment yields critical and analytical understanding of practices making the sharing of this knowledge possible and clear. This is important for the success of continuing the work when I return to the United States. I have many avenues through which to share these new principles and processes.

The ensemble of Out Of Hand Theater trains together on a regular basis. Upon my return to the United States, these company-training sessions will be the vehicle through which I teach and share the knowledge gained at Exeter. These sessions will act to further build upon what I bring back and the knowledge will be incorporated into the methods we currently use. Our company training is also offered to the public in weekend long workshops. I have been an instructor of these workshops for the past five years and will continue to lead them upon my return. I also teach theater courses at Actor's Express Theater and I have been a guest lecturer and guest instructor at Emory University. My training at Exeter will be shared through these institutions as well.

I come to this project with extensive experience and knowledge of physical theater practice, training, creation and performance. My current training regimen includes regular practice of Suzuki, Viewpoints, American circus clown, European clown, cross-fit athletic training, and combat and stunt training. These are all excellent training methods for any physical performer and I certainly plan to continue my practice of all of them. I hope to be able to share these intercultural methods with my colleagues at Exeter and return to share my newly learned methods with my company in Atlanta. My personal performances and those of the ensemble of Out Of Hand Theater will be made richer by the integration of psychophysical actor training. Combining the knowledge I gain from my time of study in England with physical training methods I am already using will allow me to pursue my goal of breathing new life into American physical theater training and performance.



PERSONAL STATEMENT

[REDACTED]; United Kingdom, Acting

Lady Macbeth was the first role for which I knew I was perfect. In fifth grade I tried to produce Macbeth in my back yard with a bunch of my ten-year-old friends and I cast myself as Lady M. However, when the parents found out about my over-rigorous rehearsal schedule the project was shut down. Luckily, I started getting my annual Shakespeare fix through performances with Oshkosh Young People's Theater. This was where I first started to learn the tools of the actor, and where I fell in love with performing and the whole idea of creating theater. I successfully produced my first show, Hansel and Grettel, when I was fifteen. I directed, designed, and co-wrote the show and played the witch. It was a huge success.

I attended Emory University in Atlanta. My college experience was highly significant, and there are a few experiences that particularly influenced my life path. The SITI Company did a three-week residence at Emory and participating in this workshop was the catalyst for me to start my own theater company. Principles of constant training, ensemble building, and combining culturally diverse working methods were instilled in me by SITI Company. Two classes, Creating New Works and Theater Administration, completed the recipe for creating my own theater company. I founded Out Of Hand Theater in Atlanta, GA in 2000.

For the past eight years I have been operating this company. It is a company founded on the principle that theater artists – like athletes and musicians – must constantly train in order to achieve and maintain excellence. OOH is an ensemble of widely talented artists who train together and create dynamic original work. I have spent years building this theater into a nationally recognized company. Out Of Hand Theater is the greatest accomplishment of my life. I'm thrilled by the prospect of bringing the physical actor training that I learn at Exeter back to Atlanta and immediately putting it use with my company.

My other job, and great joy, is working for The Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit. Teams of two clowns make "clown rounds" in children's hospitals. It is incredibly challenging both artistically and personally, and it is also very fulfilling. Being 'Dr. Me Me' requires constant physical control and animation, quick thinking and improvisational skills, and continually adjusting the performance size, color, and tone to suit each particular child/room/audience. It is a faithful reminder that highly skilled performance can truly move an audience. Whether it be a sick child, a grieving parent, or stressed-out staff member, through the nuances of performance all of these audiences can be brought joy, release, or a moment of needed diversion. During my time in England I'm hoping to have the opportunity to connect with the UK Clown Doctors and make some visits to hospitals in Newcastle.

I love my theater company. I love my jobs. I love my life. I look forward to missing these things while I'm in England, and I look forward to their increased richness upon my return.

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