



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

HSS Scholar

Madeline Jane Welch

MAJORS: RELIGIOUS STUDIES & SOCIOLOGY

Educational Highlights: A trip to India before my freshmen year at the College sparked a curiosity and passion within me for learning about, as well as immersing myself in, cultures different from my own. I took two years of Hindi, helping out at the World Cultures Fair and participating in events at the local Hindu temple, and earned an excellence award for language mastery. In the fall of 2014, I studied abroad in Bali, Indonesia, learning Bahasa Indonesia, and studying the rich religious culture present on the island through trips to temples and my interactions with my Balinese friends and homestay family. In my time as both a religious studies and sociology major, I have maintained a 3.9 GPA and was inducted into the Phi Eta Sigma National Collegiate Honor Society and Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society. I have been awarded the “Outstanding Student Award” by both the religious studies and sociology faculty. I am also currently enjoying teaching what I have so passionately studied as a World Religions teacher at the local Unitarian Universalist Church, and am the Vice President of the Students Association of Religious Studies.



Research Focus or Project: While abroad in Bali, I conducted a month long fieldwork-based independent study project on Balinese Hindu cremation ceremonies and funerary rites. I recently presented this research in March of 2016 at the American Academy of Religion’s Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion in Atlanta, GA. In the fall of 2015, I interned with the Christian Jewish Council of Greater Charleston, a local interfaith nonprofit, which sparked my interest in using interfaith dialogue to increase social cohesion and tolerance and decrease religious bias and violence.

Future Plans: After I spend the summer in Charleston, I plan to return to India to teach English, as well as learn and study the unique religious culture present there. I also plan on doing a year-long master’s program in Europe in the field of Peace and Conflict Resolution for the 2017-2018 academic year. I hope in the future to be a part of, or create, a local organization that uses interfaith dialogue to foster mutual respect between people of all faith backgrounds, whether at home or abroad.

This award presented by Jerold L. Hale, dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston on the 6th day of May, 2016.