2022 HSS Scholar

KELSEY GALLO

Majors: Religious Studies and Spanish

Educational Highlights: Entering the College of Charleston, I was an undeclared freshman who hoped to study theology and was only slightly interested in world religions. Little did I know that when I took an Honors Approaches to Religion class during my first semester, I would begin to appreciate the histories, cultures, and philosophies behind the world’s religions and their role in forming a more deeply aware society. I found myself wanting to be a part of that society, so I declared a religious studies major and sought to represent religious studies in my various involvements with the College, especially as an Honors Student Ambassador and a member of the Scholar-Citizen Initiative. My experience has taught me that a religious studies major can make valuable contributions to our wealth of knowledge through her immersion in religion as an aspect of human life. With an HSS Scholar Award, a 3.9 GPA, and membership in the Phi Eta Sigma and Sigma Delta Pi honors societies, I feel extremely proud of my achievements and grateful for my time at the College.

Research Focus or Project: In my junior year I interned with the Charleston Interreligious Council, writing about their efforts to reach out to the diverse religious groups in the Charleston area. Their genuine sense of religious hospitality struck me and led to me writing about interfaith organizations and their promotion of the common good for my Honors bachelor’s essay in Spring and Fall 2021. While conducting research, I learned a great deal about interfaith gatherings and their ability to inspire people from varied backgrounds to work towards peace. I have presented my work at the inaugural CofC Expo and the Richard Macksey National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium.

Future Plans: I plan to spend time with my family before traveling abroad, something I never got to do during the pandemic. I also hope to serve with a non-profit religious or interfaith organization near where I live. My long-term goal is to become a sister in a Catholic religious order where I can continue my love for research and writing and possibly study for a master’s degree in religious studies or a related field.

This award is presented by Gibbs Knotts, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston, Spring 2022.