2021 HSS Scholar

ALYSSA RAFFERTY

Majors: Sociology and Public Health

Educational Highlights: Spring of 2020 I had the opportunity to be a Teacher’s Apprentice for Social Statistics and I really enjoyed this experience. I felt like I really grew in my ability to learn about a subject not just as a student, but from the perspective of a teacher. I was able to create my own lesson for the students and I thought it was interesting to see how much I had grown since I had taken the class as a student. Another highlight was Fall of 2020, I had the opportunity of interning at the Green Heart Project, which was so cool to see the interworking of a local nonprofit. I loved learning about gardening and being able to create fun for the students.

Research Focus or Project: Fall of 2020 I took Urban Sociology, and our semester long project was to do an ethnographic study. This was really interesting, and I chose to study vegans. I entered an online community of Vegans. For six weeks, I observed and did research on social dynamics within this community. I related my findings to in-groups and out-groups, social boundary making, and impression management. I appreciated this experience because it felt very hands on, and made me realize how interesting and tedious research in sociology can be. Besides this, I have really enjoyed studying criminology and drug-related issues in the United States. I have taken three classes that explore these topics and I think the information I’ve learned in these classes about different harmful policies within the US need to be discussed more.

Future Plans: I am taking a year off, and then planning to return to school to earn my master’s degree in Fall of 2022. I am debating between studying to get a Master of Public Health or a Master of Social Work. I’d love to be involved in Public Health to create better conditions for women’s health both in the US and globally.

This award is presented by Gibbs Knotts, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Sociology at the College of Charleston, Spring 2021.