Kayla Sitton

Majors: Religious Studies and International Studies, Asia Concentration

Educational Highlights: I took my first Religious Studies course during my sophomore year as a requirement for International Studies. The academic study of religion immediately piqued my curiosity and so I declared my major in RELS just before the semester ended. I fell in love with the historical, cultural, and socio-political analyses involved inherent to the field and have not regretted my choice in the slightest. My confidence in my major was re-affirmed when I studied abroad in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and China, where religion operates in the people’s daily lives differently than here in the States.

Research Focus or Project: Since declaring my major in RELS, course on Asian and African American religions have shifted my intellectual focus towards the intersection of race and religion. Though I knew that religion played incredible roles in our social and political lives, it was not until I began writing my bachelor’s essay did I come to fully understand just how critical a role religion plays in our lives. My bachelor’s essay explores the ways in which the field of religious studies can fundamentally transform during the era of Black Lives Matter and a growing generation of social activists.

Future Plans: After taking a gap year, I plan to pursue a PhD in religious studies so that I can enter academia and continue exploring the societal effects of the intersection of race, religion, and gender.

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 2021.