

SMALL WORLD MAGAZINE

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Photo: *Alexander Long* in Yueyaquan National Park near the city of Dunhuang. Dunhuang is on the southern edge of the Gobi desert.

GOBI DESERT



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Footsteps into the Middle Kingdom: An Adventure through Western China along the old Silk Road

Alexander Long



Alexander Long took a leave of absence from his studies at Ohio State for a nearly two-year long trip through China. In his article, he describes his adventures travelling through the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of western China. The photos in this article are from both Xinjiang and other regions of China.

"While I was studying abroad in China on a prolonged leave of absence nearly two years in length, my mother and grandmother came to visit me. I decided to take them up into the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. I wanted to go as far out as I could and then slowly return into the center of China, hence the name of my trip: Footsteps into the Middle Kingdom.

The region is in not homogenous with large variations in cities and climates. However, a huge part of the region is extremely arid with about 5% of its land area fit for human habitation. The region has a large Muslim Uyghur population composing 45% of the ethnic

population with 41% Han on a gradient from west to east. In places, the traditional culture with heavy Muslim influence is prevalent. To visit, cultural sensitivity and practices are recommended, as well as learning some basic phrases in the Uyghur language.

Traveling in Xinjiang posed several unique issues beyond what you would normally face. As with many remote regions of China, simply speaking Putonghua is not always going to be sufficient outside tourist and service areas. As an English speaker it is nearly impossible to get reliable information on the region online. However, as China continues to become more prosper-

ous, Chinese tourism within the country has rapidly increased and a basic tourist infrastructure has arisen. English will not get you anywhere on the ground except maybe into a fancy hotel. I found the places we were able to find online were usually overpriced and generally inferior to comparable hotels in the area which could be found by inquiring upon arrival. Ideally it's always best to have contacts in the region which you travel, but with 96% of the population in the eastern part of the country, making contacts beforehand in Xinjiang is not easy. As a foreign passport holder, the hotel selection is more limited. This is the case through most of the country.



Alexander had the opportunity to horseback ride in Zhongdian in northern Yunnan. The town was recently renamed with the English name Shangri-la in a bid to try to increase tourism to the city. It was part of greater Tibet before the PRC shrunk Tibet and the province. It is one of the closest places in China to Tibet. It is also the home of a huge lamasery, and historically was the seat of power for several of the early dalai lamas.

Generally, as a rule of travel, there will always be a mix between people trying to exploit foreigners for money and honest professionals doing their jobs. The more remote the region, the greater the value of HUMINT, to use that term. Getting out and talking and asking questions is vital to significantly reduce costs and to open up new options. This was also vital because internet availability was sporadic. I experienced a few blackouts, which is consistent with the growing pains of a rapidly growing county. I definitely felt like an outlier traveling with two silver haired women, however traveling with a grandmother can have very real advantages. It's a tradeoff between mobility and traveling cheaply given the

friendliness and disarming quality that comes with traveling with a 73 year old woman.

It is my observation that the police are not highly visible. This is very different from what you would expect, for example, in Egypt where there is a very clear and heavy police presence around tourist locations, usually heavily armed. It is my sense the Chinese authorities try to promote economic growth and Hanification as the main means of keeping stability; however, the People's Armed Police are always on hand. Generally, large temples, mosques and historic sites will be funded by the government and meticulously restored as a way to encourage tour-

ism, but in my opinion this is also to buy a moderate message.

The scenery in Xinjiang was amazing, no matter the form of transportation. It is primarily a very arid climate devoid of life or color save their musty brown low mountains with occasional plateaus, all absolutely bare and stark, yet mesmerizing in the lines and patterns carved by the torrents of water that cascaded down long ago. The rocky crags and gullies were harsh and inhospitable yet alluring to the eye in the desolate symmetry of patterns etched over the ages.

We started in the city of Kashagar or Kashi, the westernmost city in China near the border with Tajikistan and

proceeded back. Kashi was by far one of the most amazing and culturally rich experiences of my time in China. Over 90% of the population of Kashgar is ethnically Uyghur, and like many cities, it was divided into a large modern segment, nearly indistinguishable from any city, and a smaller but very traditional Muslim section or old town. The old town was a bustling labyrinth of streets with families, older men, groups of women shopping and children dashing about and shyly saying "Hello, hello".

Although the government is purportedly tearing down the old city with great speed, my observation is while there is much construction and renovation, the situation is more complex than the simplistic analysis readily offered on the internet. On the one hand, there are many new modern 20 story housing units which have been constructed literally adjacent to the structures of old. On the other hand, there are many old city renovations being done by hand, the old way, with structures temporarily held up by an army of supports hewn from sapling poplar trees while the local masons

and laborers reconstruct and strengthen the home using as many of the bricks as could be rescued from the original but mixing in modern touches.

An excerpt from my trip log.

"In the old town food was everywhere. Bakers were forming the bread and lowering it to hot ovens right on the street, fruit vendors hawked their plums and melons, the dried fruit and nut salesmen clamored for the attention of passers-by and men chatted with one another as they made skewers out of piles of lamb or goat to barbecue later. So many people were engaged in actual craft and trade: a younger man was hewing instruments out of solid wood, a tin smith worked to fashion a tool, older men were sewing slippers on the street, young men stitched belts, and cobblers repaired heels and soles for waiting customers. I always enjoy the sight of so many older people out socializing; I think it's a very important part of community that can be lost in our own spaced-out suburban car culture. There was a sea of motor bikes parked, their seats covered with what we would call "oriental" carpets. We saw so many craftsmen; it was in-

credible, the copper smiths, the tin-smiths, the men making and sharpening knives, garden tools, scythes.

The colors were astonishing. Women moved about in groups in patterned skirts and dresses in a myriad of colors and textures with brightly colored scarves covering their hair or with simple brown cloth scarves on their heads or over their heads, completely obscuring their faces. Children were brightly clad and babies had extraordinary outfits in vibrant tones with bits of shiny mirror stitched in. Sometimes lace or small decorations were attached. Some of the stalls were painted red. The fruit and vegetables stood out, as did the rich warm browns and gold of the dried fruit and nuts under the golden tarps. Green melons were piled high on carts pulled by motorbikes with one or two cut to reveal their deep red and yellow interiors."

The standard restaurants usually had an upstairs level for ladies, with mostly men eating on the first level or outdoors, café style. A typical meal would consist of the house specialty as well as skewers of mutton. The meat was fine



The skyline of Pudong. Pudong is the financial and commercial district of Shanghai, China.

and interspersed with chunks of liver and fat. The local house specialty (available on the street and in restaurants small and large) was good and inexpensive (50 yuan worth— just over 7 dollars— fed us all well). It was a traditional mixture of vegetables and dried fruit (raisins, prunes, carrots, onions and I am not sure what else) cooked with rice and topped with roast mutton. We often drank tea and had several fantastic experiences with different teas.

At one restaurant, it was extraordinary. A mixture of black tea infused in a clear pot with a center cylinder filled with raisins, the tiny apples, fresh local golden raisins and shards of local crystallized sugar. A thread of local honey was dramatically dipped out of a small glass pot and carefully etched into the glass tea cup before the scalding tea was swirled in. We were amazed by the complexity of flavors and the purity of ingredients, all of which were local. To our disappointment, the honey could only be bought in portions of multiple kilos – too large to carry – especially since we were uncertain it would pass through customs.

Kashi also has a vast Grand Bazaar because it is relatively close to the four international borders of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It acts as a hub for regional goods. To use another excerpt from my log.

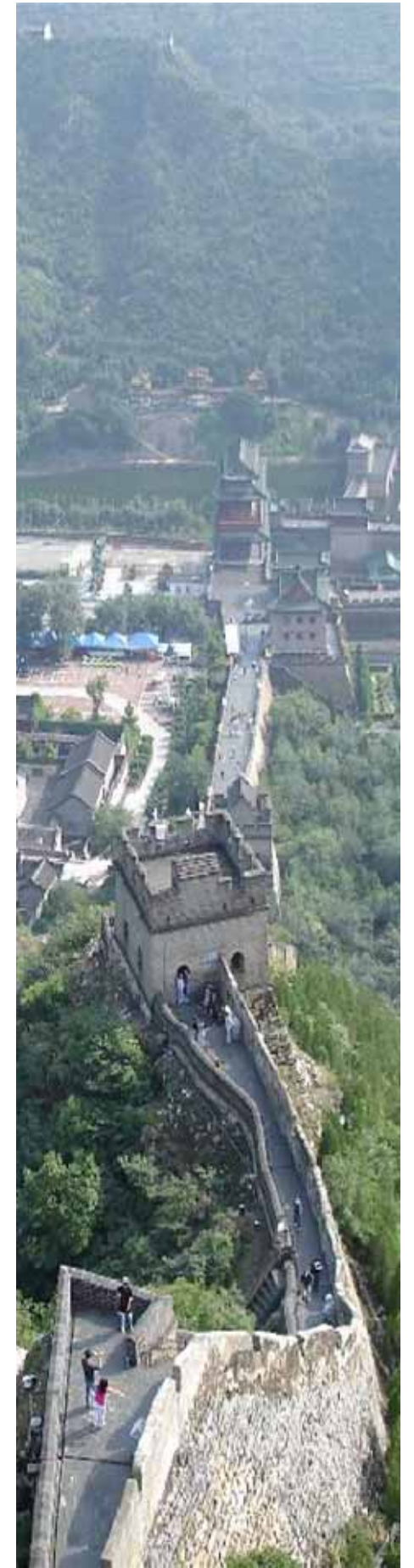
"It is difficult to describe a market so burgeoning with life in its many forms: families, mothers, children, babies, small boys, giggling girls, children peering shyly, old men with donkey carts, whole families on donkey carts, whole families on a flatbed pulled by a motorcycle, a man with a mother sheep on a string and three lambs trotting behind, people haggling and others cleaning up or setting up. Even among the textiles and rug vendors, one found men selling melon slices, other men selling shaved ice mixed with either milk and syrup or yogurt and syrup. Inside, one could purchase a dozen different ethnic

dresses not to mention the array of furs and scarves. Only jewelry was not in evidence for sale. Every other thing imaginable was there.

Outside in the alleys were freshly slaughtered animals in one lane while another had parts of old machines being reassembled and repaired or just parts to take home to repair. One man was carefully taking apart bicycle pumps and reconstructing them out of a graveyard of pump parts. Another had scads of old shoes he was cleaning, repairing and organizing to sell. To see piles of old shoes surprised me since nearly everyone gets their shoes repaired by the many cobblers. In and amidst the buzz and hum of activity were several stalls that served as dental clinics with patients in chairs. Other stalls had barber or beauty shops.

Our next destination was the city of Turpan. The long distance bus was a bit decrepit but it made its way handily on the highway across the mostly barren landscape. The mountain has a beautiful range of red tones due to the iron oxide in the soil. The shades of red are lovely, although not easy to capture on film. As we slowly traveled the land got flatter and we started passing many, many wind turbines. At the bus terminal in Turpan we were eagerly greeted by a bevy of unlicensed cabbies who shouted out that they could take us to the hotel. After a quick survey we took off and of course the driver told us he could act as our guide tomorrow. After some negotiating the price we took his information.

This is reputed to be one of the hottest places on the earth, which may have just been the city bragging, but undoubtedly it was one of the hottest and driest places I have ever been. Every scrap of green is directly linked to an irrigation system. The city is famous for its very long history of underground tunnels carrying water from the mountains to the city. The Bezklik grottos near the city are over 1000 years old





with ancient drawings and paintings of Buddha, Bodhisattvas and Uyghur people and other religious figures. They were most remarkable for the utter destruction and pillaging by a German named Stein, who removed entire fore walls and side walls to take the art back to Germany, where it now resides in a museum in Berlin. The grottos overlooked a valley fed by a stream which danced its way through the parched canyon, adding a sheltered ribbon of life and a splash of color to the landscape. The Ancient Tuyuk Village was fairly interesting. The villagers know they are on display (one pays a fee to get in and one old man had a neatly lettered sign which read 5 yuan for a photo with him), but unlike historical villages in the United States or in Europe, this was simply a semi-secluded town trying to capitalize on a growing industry. We went to see an ancient abandoned city which is being excavated (and sadly overly reconstructed) by the Chinese Authorities and its ancient underground tombs. The sites were incredible and merited a more examination, but we were withering quickly under the unrelenting heat of the midday sun. The coolness of morning was gone by 10am and the baking heat for which the city is named rules the day until about 8:30 p.m. when the day's heat breaks.

One of the most dramatic experiences of the trip occurred unexpectedly when we traveled to our next destination. My grandmother was far less than enthusiastic when I told her we would be traveling 14 hours by night bus, and she insisted I arrange for alternate transportation. We set off packed into a slightly old well-used Chinese van with two drivers and the four of us. Our drivers were Ousman who had made the round trip 60 times with tourists and Ahmed who had done it 50.

I should begin by explaining that driving in this part of China can best be described as an all-out game of chicken

– where two drivers face off running headlong at one another until one realizes the other means business and quickly darts out of the way narrowly avoiding impending death. The roads in the countryside around Turpan are for the most part two way with one lane of traffic coming in each direction.

Now, in the US, two way roads are marked by double and single yellow lines, but not here. The whole of the C-30 and the C-321 were painted with the broken dashes, meaning one can pass at any time either way, and that is exactly what the drivers do. From both lanes, in both directions drivers constantly pass. No distance between themselves and an oncoming car is too short to make a quick jig around whatever impediment rolls between them and the open road, or more likely the next impediment behind which they will quickly stash themselves narrowly averting a collision. All drivers in both lanes suffer from the syndrome, and so people are constantly passing in both directions, raising the stakes. So, one reason you absolutely need two drivers here for a road trip of a mere 540 miles is that no one has the mental tenacity to play chicken and win for ten hours straight. Therefore you absolutely need a backup driver to take over where the other left off.

The second reason for needing a backup driver became clear with about 220 kilometers remaining in the trip. As we careened along playing chicken, there was suddenly a large blue sign with lots of Chinese and Uyghur writing. Not two yards past the sign, the road literally ended. I looked up as one guide said something to another, snapped a shot of the blue sign and realized we were tumbling down onto a sandy unfinished surface complete with road equipment. What had happened was the company that was initially contracted to build the highway had embezzled most of the funds. They had laid concrete in some places only an inch thick over an elevated embank-



ment. Not surprisingly the roadway eroded and washed out, rendering the stretch of highway impassible. Because of the importance of the trucking rout, they essentially cleared and leveled a very rough and now flooding parallel path through the desert to act as a makeshift road. This was shocking but hardly surprising given the number of abandoned large scale projects we had witnessed that had failed because the companies had taken off with the money.

When off-roading became impossible our driver's next plan included racing forward between the blocked vehicles going north and south. When he ran out of room, he then cut across all the traffic again, weaving between the stopped trucks. Ahmed disembarked and jogged ahead. We inched forward on the far left of the road, slopping water and sand as we went. When we hit another complete blockage, we thought we were stuck as we were on the wrong side of the road and were faced with columns of trucks going in both directions. Ahmed was there with his jovial smile, waving us forward with one hand defiantly held up to one rig while another backed up to make room for us. When he leapt back into the already moving car, he smiled, laughed and said in broken English. "Police, Stop, Police" and he held his hand up and smiled broadly. Apparent-

ly he informed the truckers he was the police and they promptly mobilized the parking lot so we could get through. Weaving our way to the other side, we waited to see what was next.

At the next opportunity Ousman took back off across the muddy desert now accompanied by a small caravan of smaller cars. The new idea involved going back a half kilometer and getting on a piece of new unfinished highway construction we had seen that ran parallel to the sodden slippery deadlocked mess we were on. The new road had just had a foundational layer of concrete and was temporarily wrapped in a plastic coating made of a fabric-like rice sack to protect the pavement from the sand. We proceeded along for a couple of kilometers when, and suddenly, we came across a cluster of cars who had the same idea and were now stopped. Indeed, it seemed that the pavement ended in a drop of at least 15 inches. People from the other cars were gathering stones and plant material to improvise a ramp. We followed other cars carefully down, and although the rear of the car scraped and bumped hard on the edge, we made it. We were now off across the desert, again following a handful of vehicles sliding and lurching forward towards a fate unknown. Whether we might be stuck in the jam or, even worse, stuck 100 yards into the desert alongside the

jam was a matter of conjecture.

At 2:38 AM, road weary and sore from 21 hours of jostling along the desert in a van with old shocks, we at last arrived at the desert oasis city of Dunhuang.

We had been traveling down the Silk Road and it was apparent we were stepping into the sphere of more traditional Chinese Han culture. Dunhuang has some of the most beautiful sand dunes one could imagine. The smooth curves of the dunes are transfixing. The crisp angular ridges rise and fall as they weave into one another set against the blue backdrop. Dunhuang also boasts the Mogao Grottos, which are a series of hundreds of grottos carved into a cliff face. It has a 36 meter high Buddha, now the 3rd tallest in the world (after the Taliban destroyed the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan) and exquisitely preserved artwork. Dunhuang has a much more developed tourist infrastructure, in large part because it is more prevalently mentioned in classical poetry and thus has a greater cultural significance. It is the last stop on the Silk Road for many of the Han tourists coming up from Xian. Most people will not go on into Xinjiang. From Dunhuang we hopped on a 23-hour sleeper car and rode the rails into Xian and back to the huge cities of China."

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

THE STATE AND ITS CHALLENGES

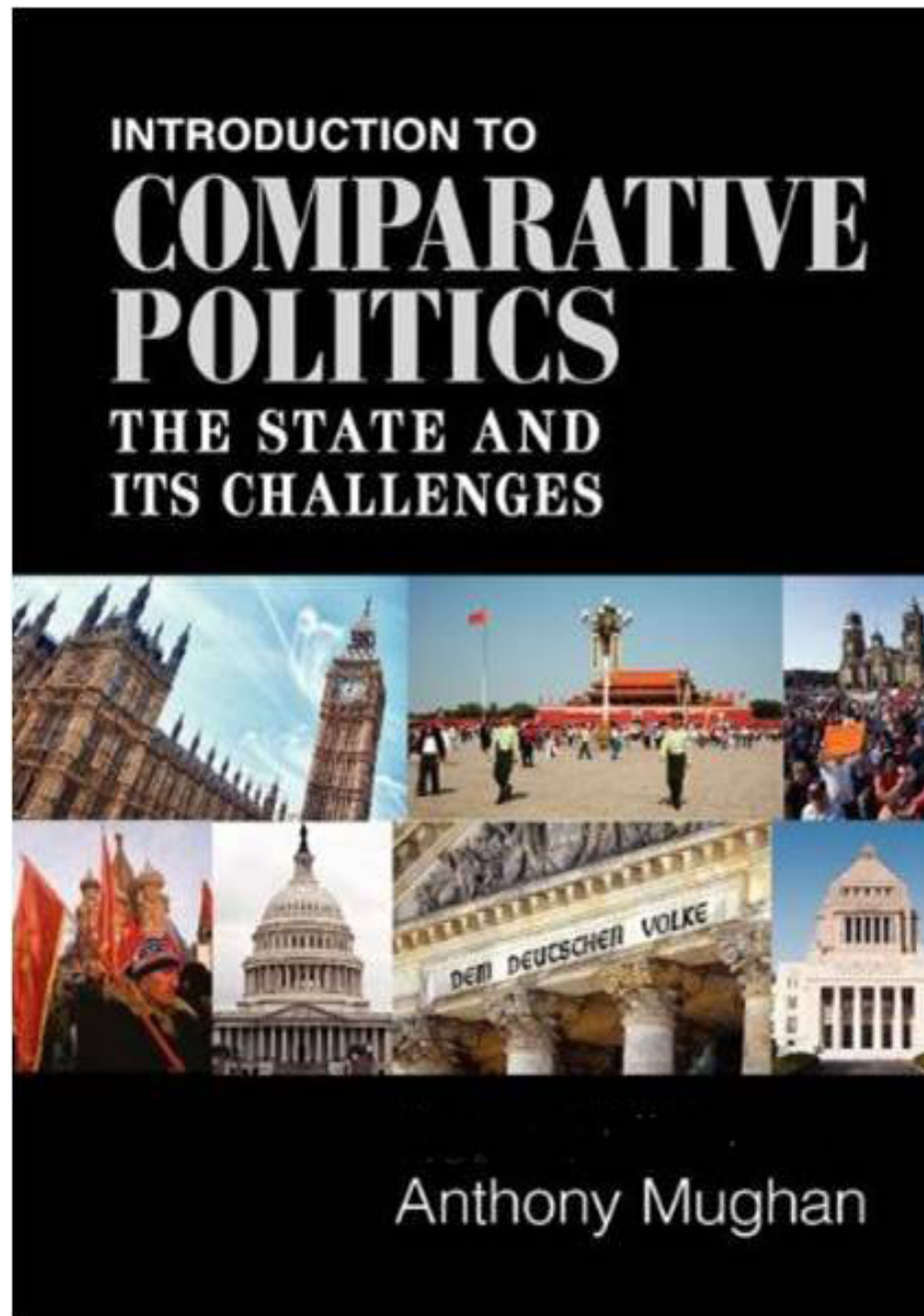
By *Anthony Mughan*

This stimulating and accessible introduction to comparative politics offers a fresh perspective on the fundamentals of political science. Its central theme is the enduring political significance of the modern state despite severe challenges to its sovereignty.

There are three main sections to the book. The first traces the origins and meaning of the state and proceeds to explore its relationship to the practice of politics. The second examines how states are governed and compares patterns of governance found in the two major regime types in the world today, democracy and authoritarianism.

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Designed to appeal to students and professors alike, this lively text engages readers as it traces states' struggles against the mutually reinforcing pressures of global economic and political interdependence, fragmented identities and secessionism, transnational criminal networks, and terrorism.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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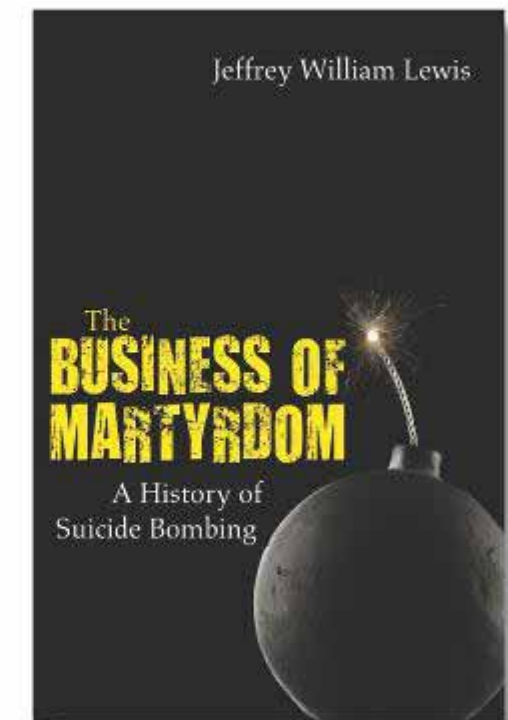
THE BUSINESS OF MARTYRDOM

A History of Suicide Bombing

By *Jeffrey William Lewis*

The Business of Martyrdom is the only comprehensive history available of suicide bombing from its origins in Imperial Russia to the present day. The book examines not only the bombers themselves but the users of suicide bombers—the organizations that train and sponsor them—to explain differences in suicide bombing over time and from region to region. Writing for a broad audience, the author draws on the history and philosophy of technology to explain the diffusion and evolution of suicide bombing, pulling together recent literature on the subject and reconciling explanations that seem to be at odds with one another.

Lewis presents a model for suicide bombing that integrates individual psychology, organizational motivations, and social support. He argues that suicide bombing is a technology that has been invented and re-invented at different times in different areas but always for the same purpose: resolving a mismatch in military capabilities between antagonists by utilizing the available cultural and human resources. To explain inconsistencies, he examines suicide bombing as a technological system that integrates human beings, cultures, and devices and directs them toward specific ends. He views suicide bombers as components within a much larger system that has been shaped by a host of social, cultural, and operational constraints throughout its existence. Incorporating insights from the historical analysis of other technological systems with current thinking on suicide bombing, the book helps readers develop a full appreciation of the unified yet diverse phenomenon. His explanations of the global decline in suicide bombing and the success of some countries in reducing the threat of suicide bombing add significantly to a better understanding of the subject.



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JEFFREY WILLIAM LEWIS teaches in the Undergraduate International Studies Program at The Ohio State University and focuses on international security issues. He earned his PhD from Ohio State in 2002 and was the recipient of a Fulbright Hays Grant for doctoral research and a guest scholar of Germany's Max Planck Society for the Advancement of the Sciences. In 2007 he received a postdoctoral research fellowship from the START Center (Studies on Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism) at the University of Maryland. He lives in Columbus, OH.

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Soteni International, KENYA

Alexa Gudelsky



Alexa Gudelsky pictured in front of the Soteni Village of Hope sign, in Nairobi, Kenya on the way to her summer internship. SOTENI International is a non-profit organization involved in public health projects. "SOTENI is currently partnering with Proctor & Gamble International to work on clean water projects in remote areas. We were distributing water filtration kits to members of HIV support groups in various villages."

This past spring I was determined to find an internship abroad doing development work. One evening I was at a family dinner discussing my future with my friend when her mother introduced me to SOTENI International. As a practicing doctor in Cincinnati she was not only familiar with SOTENI International but knew the director of the non-profit as well. She told me this organization works in Kenya and is involved in public health projects, specifically those related to HIV prevention. Knowing my

passion for this kind of work, she thought I would be a good candidate for one of their internship positions.

I was very excited about this opportunity! I immediately contacted the director at the main office in Cincinnati, and I was informed that they had available internships abroad for the summer. I sent in my resume and after a phone interview, I was accepted. I departed for Nairobi, Kenya right after final exams in June 2011.

During my stay, I traveled from Nairobi to peripheral offices in two different rural locations. For one of the trips, we missed our bus and ended up hopping on another that took a longer route to go to the same general region. To get to the final destination we were "stuffed" into a local van called a *mata-tu* that has seats for 11, although we shared the ride with 21 other people. It was pouring rain, ourselves and our luggage were soaked, and the locals both on the van and outside were fas-



Kids will be kids! Our host mom's grandchildren and their friends (being silly) in Mbakalo, Western Province. "My advice to future interns is to always be modest and humble when stepping into a new environment."

inated with Americans. In fact, since they all love President Obama so much, they would cheer "yeah-Obama" at every stop. Our presence created a bit of a ruckus, and made the trip "more interesting" for everyone involved.

SOTENI is currently partnering with Proctor & Gamble International to work on clean water projects in remote areas. We were distributing water filtration kits to members of HIV support groups in various villages. I then visited these groups to assess changes in their health and gather the overall feedback for this product.

I also worked on a needs assessment of the multi-village region to be served by a dispensary. Our task was to go from house to house with a 25-

question survey to learn about the residents' knowledge on such topics as sanitation, water, mosquito control and maternal health care. The dispensary is still fairly new to the area, so SOTENI wanted to make sure they were utilizing their resources to the best of their ability. The most popular reasons for locals to visit the dispensary were to be given vaccinations, to give birth, and to be treated for typhoid or malaria. Malaria was endemic to the region and luckily none of the interns ever became seriously ill. We always made sure to use our bug-spray and sleep under mosquito nets.

I've done a lot of volunteering abroad in the past, but this was the most substantial and demanding project I have ever worked on. We did not even have plumbing or electricity, so every task

was a challenge. I have learned that only small steps can be taken in such an environment and that one needs to celebrate small accomplishments. Yet at the same time, it is important to recognize that there is so much more work to do in developing countries.

My advice to future interns is to always be modest and humble when stepping into a new environment. In situations like this you are the outsider, so it is important to create relationships and trust. Also, in developing countries such as Kenya, Murphy's law is always in effect. If anything can go wrong, it will. You need to be flexible and have a fantastic sense of humor, because you will need both!

OSU Athletics

Not just football.

OSU's Fencing Team won their fourth NCAA fencing championship on Sunday, March 25th, 2012 at the St. John Arena. Five members of the team are International Studies majors: Kristian Boyadzhiev, Marco Canevari, Zain Shaito, Daniel Tafoya, and Ognjen Vesic. Zain won his first NCAA individual Championship in foil and earned first team All-America honors. He was the number one seed and maintained his composure despite injuries to win the competition. He is working to secure a position on the 2016 U.S. Olympic team. Before coming to OSU, he earned a gold medal at the Junior World Championships in Catania, Italy as a member of the U.S national team. He is a six-time medalist in World Cup events.

Marco and Kristian both appeared in the semifinal rounds of epee, contributing points to the overall men's championship earned by the team. They also both earned first team All-America status for their



NCAA Champs!

performances. The honor is the second for Marco.

Coming into the day, the Buckeyes held a 14-point lead over Princeton and remained stable through the first hour and a half before opening a 20-point gap that clinched the title. The Scarlet and Gray added one more point to their lead to finish with a 21-point advantage, 182 to Princeton's 161. Notre Dame nearly overcame the Tigers in the final round, but finished third with 160 victories. St. John's (N.Y.) and Penn State rounded out the Top 5.

The championship is the third combined (men's and women's) for the program, with all three coming under the direction of head coach Vladimir Nazlymov (2004, 2008 and 2012). Ohio State won its first title in 1942 when the NCAA supported only men's fencing.

To learn more about OSU's Varsity Men's and Women's Fencing Teams go to: <http://www.ohiostatebuckeyes.com/sports/c-fenc/osu-c-fenc-body.html>.



Kristian Boyadzhiev
BULGARIA

Daniel Tafoya
USA

Ognjen Vesic
SERBIA

Zain Shaito
USA

Marco Canevari
ITALY

My Internship in the United States Embassy, ROME

Kaitlin Cutshaw



Kaitlin Cutshaw (third from left) pictured with Ambassador David Thorne (to her right) the United States Ambassador to Italy. Though I learned a great deal about the inner-workings of an American Embassy; how the different offices work together to carry out U.S. foreign policy especially the Consular section, I have to say that it was really the people that made my experience unforgettable. “

“Last summer, I was lucky enough to participate in the short-term study abroad program called Literary Locations which encompass an English literature class taken Spring quarter followed immediately by a ten day trip to Rome. Though the class along with the trip was an immensely rewarding and interactive way to discover a new city, this is not a plug for the program but rather a story about how it lead me to another amazing adventure.

One night on the trip we went out to explore the city and ended up walking past the American Embassy located on the former haunt of the rich and famous, Via Veneto. As I walked past the brightly lit compound, glowing impressively in the night, I made a silent vow to some day work there. As soon as I

returned from the trip I searched the internet for any sort of internship or job opportunity at the Embassy and was of course directed to the U.S. Department of State’s website which details a number of opportunities for undergraduate college students including fellowships, clerical positions and internships. I soon learned all about their Internship program for undergraduates and started the application process. The program offers both domestic and overseas internships all year round and gives the applicant the opportunity to choose what bureaus or posts at which they would be most interested to work. I, of course, selected the Rome Embassy and a couple months later, to my overwhelming excitement, received an internship offer for my first and only choice.

Back in August, when I had formally accepted the internship, it was hard to believe that I was going to realize my life-long dream of living in Italy, and now that I’m actually here, it’s still hard to grasp! Growing up, the Italian American culture was an ever-present influence on my personal identity, fed (sometimes literally in the form of my grandmother’s homemade manicotti) by my mother’s side of our family. As a freshman in college I was excited by the opportunity to embrace my heritage even more through Italian language courses, which, unbeknownst to me at the time, would prepare me for my future internship. Three years later, I’m here in Italy, living my dream and gaining invaluable insight into a possible future career.

As *una stagista* at the Rome Embassy, I worked in the Consulate building in the Non-immigrant Visa Section also known as NIV; one of the many government acronyms I had to become familiar with. The primary job of NIV is to oversee all foreign nationals applying for visas in order to travel to the U.S. Most often, these applicants were Italian citizens travelling to the U.S. for business or pleasure, but for more than 90 days. It was also common to see a large number of applicants applying for visas to work, study or participate in an exchange program at an American school. As part of the application process, most people applying for visas are required to appear at the Consulate for an interview. I was lucky enough to observe a good number of interviews before the Consulate closed to undergo renovations. I closely shadowed the Foreign Service Officers trained to be Consular Officers as they interviewed not only native Italians but also people of many different backgrounds and nationalities. It was amazing to see and hear the story of each applicant and their purpose for travelling to the United States. Many were graduate students or high school exchange students travelling for academic enrichment, research aspirations, and quite often with an enthusiasm to improve their English.

After the closing of the consulate, with most non-immigrant visa applications handled by the other three consulates in Italy, the Rome visa section held interviews for emergency situation applicants as well as for diplomatic and treaty investor visa applicants. Throughout the internship, I was able to pick up more and more quickly on the many different types of visas available for foreign nationals. I learned a great deal about the standard procedures for visa processing in Rome and also in other U.S. Consulates all over the world.

NIV works in close connection with American Citizen Services or ASC, another section in the Consulate, which

allowed me to get a glimpse of some of the work they do in that section. One of the most exciting moments, that I was lucky enough to get the behind-the-scenes perspective on, was the tragic Costa Concordia shipwreck in January. Rome Embassy played a leading role in providing aid and services to the Americans who were aboard the cruise liner; many of which had lost all personal items aboard including passports and travel documents. ACS enlisted the help of NIV for extra manpower to tackle the emergency. After seeing first-hand and hearing about the emergency response, I was amazed by how important the Embassy and the Rome Consulate were in handling the unfortunate event.

Though I learned a great deal about the inner-workings of an American Embassy; how the different offices work together to carry out U.S. foreign policy especially the Consular section, I have to say that it was really the people that made my experience unforgettable. On my first day at the Embassy, the walk up to the wrought-iron gates, patrolled by stern-faced Italian guards, that surround the compound was quite a humbling experience. I was mentally preparing myself for an all-business, no nonsense job, where I’d be expected to prove myself worthy to be a part of the U.S. Government’s diplomatic mission.

Looking back, this thought is almost laughable. It was amazing how the nature of the Italian culture and way-of-life had infiltrated the Embassy (in a good way of course) to encourage a much more, dare I say, laid back atmosphere. I don’t want to give the wrong impression (or get in trouble from my supervisor) because all the Embassy employees were truly hard-working people and devoted to strengthening Italian American relations and representing the U.S.; but I was not expecting them to be as warm and welcoming as they were. A big part of this focused yet relaxed environment may have been that over half of

the employees at the Embassy are Italian. This definitely held true in my section, as only three of the nine employees in my office were American. In addition, every person I met at the Embassy, American or Italian, had an amazing story. Many of them spoke multiple languages, had traveled all over the world, and had done amazing things. It was very inspiring and motivating to work every day in the same building as such accomplished people.

In general, just having the opportunity to step on the grounds of the American Embassy in Rome was such a great honor. The Ambassador’s office sits in a building called Palazzo Margherita, a historical gem that dates back to the 1880’s when it was used as the royal residence for Queen Margherita of Savoy. This building, called The Chancery, stands majestically as the main building on the grounds surrounded by even more beautifully built offices adorned with fantastically old statues and decorated with elegant detail and impressive works of art. Aside from the honor of working in such a historical and beautiful place, the added perks, like access to the on-site gym, Italian style café, commissary where American grocery products could be bought, a health unit and special discounts for sightseeing and other community events in Rome, were pretty great as well.

Outside of work, I had the opportunity to explore one my favorite cities even more. Rome is not easily described in few words but I admire it for not only its historical prominence but also its vibrantly crazy and exciting culture. I had the opportunity to travel around Italy and to other cities in Europe such as Paris and Barcelona while I was there, but I always loved coming back to Rome. I just felt comfortable there; I knew the city and how to get around, I knew the language (well, relatively), and I felt I related to the people. Coming back to Rome, was like coming home.”

My Internship with Back2Back Ministries MEXICO

Rory Deken



Rory with children at a temporary assistance house for children in distress. Part of his job as an intern included the staging of entertainment and social events. He highly recommends to anyone wishing to pursue a career linked to a particular country or world region to be sure to spend time there and become immersed with the people and culture "on the street."

Rory Deken is a senior Spanish major with a minor in Latin American Studies. He will be graduating this Spring 2012. Here is his story about his internship experience in Cancun, Mexico.

"I had the pleasure to intern in Cancun, Mexico during the summer of 2011 and earn International Studies internship credit as well. I learned of the Cancun internship through my church when I participated in a one-week internship in Monterrey, Mexico linked to our fundraising efforts for Mexican children. I applied for the eight-week Cancun internship and was accepted to join the trip. Once accepted, I contacted Inter-

national Studies to request credit for my upcoming work experience.

Back2Back Ministries runs temporary assistance houses for children in distressed situations. Some are orphans. Others are entangled in complex custody disputes between their parents. Some are from homes where it is not safe. Back2Back works in direct cooperation with the children's services agencies of the Mexican government and brings the talents, efforts and financial support of American congregations to the service of those in need.

Back2Back volunteers and interns typi-

cally serve in supervisory roles on such varied projects as construction (I served as a liaison between independent building contractors and government agencies), staging of entertainment and social events and leadership of trips and excursions. Our most important mission is to run safe homes for the children. I worked at four different homes in Cancun.

My Spanish language skills were valuable in that I was able to mediate between the other participants on the trip, who mainly spoke only English, and the local people with whom we worked and served. My knowledge of Latin Ameri-



ca gained at OSU was also very valuable. There were many aspects of Mexican culture, society, politics and economics that I was aware of that greatly aided my ability to "navigate" for our group while we were there. Such an immersion experience also greatly increased my own knowledge and understanding of Mexican culture and society. It was a valuable and inspiring experience!

Friday evenings were our "time off." I was amazed by the number of street festivals, outdoor stage plays, concerts,

street musicians and comedy acts. Kids would be driving around in little battery-powered cars, adding a boisterous edge to the scene.

There is an incredible amount of social interaction in the poor communities. Everyone knows each other, and everyone is willing to provide help and assistance to those in greatest need. These are very warm and relational people. The human care and kindness I saw had the most impact upon me of all that I experienced there. I am now motivated and inspired to return to Mexico. I see

human need in many areas that needs to be addressed. I want to create my own ministry or outreach program to contribute in the many ways I saw in my work with Back2Back Ministries.

I highly recommend to anyone wishing to pursue a career linked to a particular country or world region to be sure to spend time there and become immersed with people and culture "on the street." I have been much enriched by my experiences in Cancun and Monterrey."

Center for American Progress, D.C.

Alexandra Constantinou



Alexandra pictured with Senator and Mrs. John Glenn, while interning for the Center for American Progress in D.C., through the John Glenn School of Public Affairs, Washington Academic Internship program. "I believe that my experience at CAP has cultivated my interests in public policy and truly helped me to adopt stances on issues and utilize accurate, nonpartisan research to back them up."

"At the Center for American Progress (CAP), I was privileged to intern under many knowledgeable, expert policy fellows who have truly altered my perspective on public policy and how it molds national debate. At CAP, employees work diligently to explore vital issues that impact not only American, but international affairs as well. They believe change is not only possible but also practical, and that our economy and nation should work for all, not just an elite group.

In the Economic Policy department, I discovered that money is everything. U.S. economic policymaking directly affects many areas of our lives, and only through strong economic growth can we hope for all Americans to have a chance at the American Dream, a theme of prosperity that has resonated with American citizens for years. The progressive economic policy at CAP works for a greater common good, and the research that I participated in dur-

ing my internship reflects that goal. Under the supervision of Donna Cooper, I primarily researched for-profit colleges and how they impact non-conventional students, as well as high student loan default rates and the implications for students and their personal finances. Although this work did not pertain primarily to international relations, I found it fascinating because the education system in America has been criticized as a deteriorating aspect of our society, with students who no longer compete well in the global economy when compared to students in other nations. The for-profit sector is a new venue for students who may not have the means necessary to attend traditional institutions of higher learning and still want a chance to achieve the American Dream. Through my research, however, I have discovered that not all for-profit institutions play fairly, but rather charge students thousands more than renowned institutions (like Ohio State, for example) for a de-

gree that will simply leave them drowning in debt. I have been asked to write three columns on this topic, which (pending approval from Donna) will be published on CAP's website for future students to see.

Under Karla Walter, I researched shared capitalism, workers' unions, collective bargaining, and many issues pertaining to the American Worker Project. Through my research, I was able to fully grasp how unions impact workers' well being and how workers' rights are a heavily debated issue, garnering much media attention in states like Ohio and Wisconsin. With our nation facing unprecedented unemployment rates, many workers are fighting a difficult battle to ensure they are being respected in the workplace and that their rights are not being infringed.

I believe my experience at CAP has cultivated my interests in public policy



Alexandra learned that bikes were the quickest way to get around D.C.! "I am thankful that I was able to live in DC and intern at CAP on the eve of an election, at a time when progressive thought may prove more important than ever before."

and truly helped me to adopt stances on issues and utilize accurate, nonpartisan research to back them up. While I was the youngest Fall Glenn Fellow this quarter and wondered before stepping foot in DC if I may have chosen to do this internship too early, I am definitely happy that I did this internship now, because I have discovered an area of interest in the non-profit sector, and I aspire to pursue a minor in non-profit management when I re-

turn to OSU. Ralph Waldo Emerson defined success as leaving "the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived: this is to have succeeded."

My internship experience in a think tank environment has instilled in me the importance of progress. Public service, in my opinion, echoes the beliefs

of Emerson: that leaving the world even a little bit better off than before is a noble accomplishment, and we should strive to elect leaders who lead by example and enact lasting change that improves not just one life, but the lives of nations and international communities alike. I am thankful that I was able to live in DC and intern at CAP on the eve of an election, at a time when progressive thought may prove more important than ever before."

Securing an Internship with the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Grant Blanton

On a morning in late September of last year, I found myself seated on the Washington, D.C., metro. The train was packed with people in business suits who were carrying briefcases and backpacks, people on their way to serve the United States in one capacity or another. Whether employed by the Department of the Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security, or any of the other departments, agencies, or bureaus, all would play crucial roles in the functioning of the federal government that day, and in turn, the well-being of the nation as a whole. When the train stopped abruptly at the George Washington University/Foggy Bottom Metro Station, I straightened my tie, gathered my belongings, and headed to my respective office. For a period of ten weeks I would be one of the previously described individuals. This was the first day of my time spent as an intern with the U.S. Department of State.

The above paragraph might sound a bit dramatic, but the feelings, emotions, and expectations I had going into my experience as a State Department intern might not seem entirely foreign to several of you. Internships with the federal government provide excellent opportunities to narrow your focus and interests as an International Studies major, and often aid in solidifying abstract concepts discussed in class. The purpose of this article is not to delve into my responsibilities as an intern, rather to explain the process by which to secure and successfully complete an internship with the federal government, the Department of State more specifically.

I am both a Chinese major and Spanish minor, and I will graduate at the end of Winter Quarter 2012. For many students majoring in International Studies or a foreign language, the Department of State is often an appealing option in

terms of employment. Foreign Service Officers are required to complete two-year tours at U.S. embassies around the world and play a direct role in maintaining a diplomatically positive U.S. presence abroad. For this reason, I applied for an internship with the Department of State, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs more specifically. This seemed to mesh well with my Chinese major, and I felt an opportunity to witness firsthand the inner-workings of the Department would help me determine whether or not a career with the Foreign Service would be best.

The initial application was relatively painless. Aside from my Statement of Intent, the information requested was fairly general, and I submitted it within three weeks. As the weeks went by, I heard nothing; I received no e-mails or telephone calls regarding my application. I began to doubt the likelihood of being accepted, but at the last minute I received a tentative offer to intern with the Department. It was at this point that I began the most anticipated, and many times dreaded, portion of the selection process: being investigated in order to be granted the necessary security clearance.

For those who are unfamiliar with the purpose of a security clearance, in simple terms, it is a classification granted to an individual that measures the extent to which the federal government feels it can trust them. For interns or employees with the Department of State, there are three possible clearance levels: confidential, secret, and top secret. Based on the thorough investigation carried out by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, an applicant will be granted one of the three previously mentioned clearances; however, it is possible to be denied a clearance altogether. If you are applying for internships with the federal government,

bear in mind that you will be required to go through the necessary investigations. Make sure your record is clean and that you have not used illegal substances in any capacity within the twelve months preceding your investigation. Drug use will almost certainly knock you out of the running.

The information covered during the investigation will include specifics regarding residences, employment history, foreign travel, and a variety of other topics. You will be required to report all foreign contacts (anyone residing in a foreign country with whom you have been in contact within the twelve months preceding the investigation), so it is wise to make a list ahead of time to streamline the process. You will also be requested to provide upwards of fifteen contacts who can verify the information reported on your security forms, and rest assured, the majority of them will be contacted. Once the process is complete, you will be notified of your clearance, and you will receive your official letter of acceptance.

Once my internship offer was made official, I accepted it without hesitation. It was at that time I began searching for housing in the D.C. area and pulling the funds together to make the experience possible (as a side note, many federal government internships, especially within the Department of State, are unpaid). Once in D.C., I realized how invaluable a federal government internship could be. I was not only gaining a deeper understanding in regards to the policy surrounding U.S.-China relations, but I was witnessing it being made and carrying it out firsthand. It is for this reason I am currently pursuing careers within the federal government, and I hope to return to D.C. as soon as possible after graduation.

Sunrise Over the Charles Bridge CZECH REPUBLIC

Jena Parker



From Left to Right: Margarita Zaboeva (Russian student), Eric Crawford (Ohio State), Evgeniia Nikulina (Russian student), Martin Prikner (Czech student), Shelby Davis (Missouri), Garren Bellis (Missouri), Jena Parker (Ohio State), Matt Eisenbath (Missouri), John Harman (Ohio State), Katie Reynolds (Missouri).

This past summer I spent six weeks studying abroad in the Czech Republic. Through lectures, field trips, and a weeklong study tour we learned about the history, political and economic development of the Central European nation. As is usually the case, the most memorable experiences were those that took place outside the classroom. The one memory that will always stay with me was our last night together as a group before heading home. All summer we kept a list of things we wanted to do while in the Czech Republic. Some were going to restaurants or bars that were local favorites and other were seeing the major tourist sites like the Prague Castle. One of the top items on our summer to-do list was to stay up and watch the sunrise over the Charles Bridge. After our last group dinner, we gathered up a group of Czech and American students to take the metro into the city for the night. At first everyone was excited to be done with finals and go out and experience the Prague nightlife for the last time, but as the night waned on people got tired and our group became smaller and smaller. With less than an hour left before dawn we made our way to the bridge feeling cold and tired. As we

waited for any sign of light we joked that maybe those that headed back to campus early had the right idea and our plan was better in theory than in reality.

When the sun finally began to come up I looked down the bridge and noticed that it was completely empty except for our group. Over the past six weeks I had spent a good amount of time in the city and bridge was always packed with tourists taking pictures and street performers trying to earn money. I felt like I was seeing the city the way it was meant to be seen for the first time. For me, history has always been in books or movies, but standing on a deserted Charles Bridge I was able to see history come alive. My imagination could fill the empty space with the Swedes who fought for control of the Old Town in the 15th century or the horse drawn carriages that were the main source of traffic on the bridge up until the 20th century. In that moment I felt more a part of the city than I ever had during my time abroad. It was like we were no longer tourists with time-crunched schedules. We were just living a typical carefree Czech night where the final destination was the bridge and the

route to it was made up as we went along.

I never mentioned any of what I was thinking to the group I was with that morning. It's one thing to have an internal monologue but it's quite another to bring it up to a bunch of people who are light heartily joking and reminiscing together. If I'm being completely honest, I know this epiphany I had would have just seemed corny if I'd said it out loud, and I didn't want to ruin the thought. Looking back I find it funny that that moment sticks out as something special. That sunrise wasn't the prettiest I'd ever seen and those laughs I shared with my friends were definitely not the best I'd ever had, but here I am writing an article about it when I could draw from a summer full of memories. Maybe it's because the Charles Bridge is so historic and I want some of my life to be a part of that history or maybe it's just one of those little moments that strikes you and stays with you for no reason at all. Either way, I will always remember how I felt that morning and how I already missed the city and the people I had met that summer.

Teaching English, FRANCE

Sarah Fries (2011)



Sara Fries graduated in Summer 2011. She completed a double major in International Relations & Diplomacy and French. During her last quarter at OSU she participated in the Washington Academic Internship Program through the John Glenn School of Public Affairs.

"I was the Development Intern for Citizens for Global Solutions, a nonprofit that focused on international cooperation to solve global problems (UN funding, Law of the Sea Treaty, Human Rights, etc). My main responsibilities were to identify potential funders, research their funding priorities, send

them letters of inquiry, and eventually get them to support CGS.

Currently, I am teaching English in France. I live in Saint-Dizier, which is in NE France, about two hours east of Paris by train. So far, I've led conversation lessons on topics such as Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, American high schools, stereotypes, and music. I love my students and it's been a lot of fun. The only thing I would change is the city-- Saint-Dizier has a population of about 25,000 and there's not a whole lot to do, but I've adjusted and I'm making the most of it."

Peace Corps, PERU

Glenn Stanley (2008)



Glenn Stanley (center photo with shovel) graduated with degrees in Security & Intelligence and Classics. Upon graduation he joined the Peace Corps where he spent two years in Peru. "Peace Corps was a greatly challenging and infinitely rewarding experience and there will always be a place in my heart for Peru."

"I will always remember the drive to my village three hours from the city of Piura, Peru, a city with the internet, fancy restaurants, and other English speakers. The road was unpaved and uphill, curving around the mountain-side climbing to my village with 200 people and not much else. I remember my first trip there sitting next to my community partner asking naive questions in broken Spanish. I arrived at my town not knowing what to do, but I was excited because that was the beauty of the Peace Corps. I had program goals, of course, but I could design and implement projects that I thought the community needed and that were interesting to me. I had never designed an entire project before, never taught a class, never written a grant, never lived outside of Ohio, never eaten intestines or guinea pig. For me, it was to be a learning experience, and I was up for the challenge.

I was a youth development volunteer for two years in the Peace Corps. Working alongside community partners, we decided that the secondary school needed a computer lab. We wanted each of the students to have their own computer. This was no small feat for a town which had had electricity for only two years and classrooms only wired for light bulbs. Creativity, perseverance, and time were all I needed. Time to learn the language, write, and receive grant money.

Creativity was called for to think of alternative ways to obtain more computers and engage students and teachers alike to learn a subject many knew nothing about.

Perseverance is needed because everything about rural Peru is different than what I was used to. We did complete the computer lab and classes have been incorporated into the school's

curriculum.

Students now learn computer basics with 13 computers. That was my main project but I also implemented environmental outreach programs, trained doctors and nurses in HIV/AIDS awareness and capacity building, and led career planning workshops for youth. During my experience I learned so much about my strengths and weaknesses, about overcoming challenges, and really to appreciate all that I have.

Peace Corps was a greatly challenging and infinitely rewarding experience and there will always be a place in my heart for Peru."

To learn more about the Peace Corps, go to: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/>.