

VARANASI, INDIA



Alyssa Schmirler

Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Recipient

Alyssa's Major: Psychology and Anthropology

Program: UW in India, Spring

How did you hear about the scholarship? I heard about the Gilman scholarship on the UW scholarship listings on MyUW.

How did the scholarship help you study abroad? The Gilman scholarship helped me enrich my study abroad semester because it provided me the funds to travel and see many historical and culturally rich places. I was able to explore many states in India seeing sites such as the architectural beauty of the Taj Mahal, religious landmarks of the Buddha, and historically rich cities such as Calcutta where the British influence remains strong today. I was also able to experience different geographical locations from desert to mountains. All these opportunities provided me with a more comprehensive understanding of the various lifestyles and religious practices throughout Northern India.

What is your biggest piece of advice for those applying for study abroad scholarships? Take the time to really think about why you are studying abroad, what you hope to get out of it, and why you chose to go to a specific place. This will really help your essays because they are looking for concrete and honest answers. Try to elaborate on your answers to show you have put a lot of thought into how your study abroad experience will impact you on a personal, intellectual, and professional way. It also helps you deepen your goals for your time abroad and forces you to really think about the commitment you are making.

In addition to your scholarship, what other resources did you use to fund your study abroad experience? I received financial aid, including grants and loans, by filling out the FAFSA. Only students receiving a Federal Pell Grant are eligible for the Benjamin A Gilman scholarship.



Alyssa, second from left, and other program participants at the Taj Mahal.

“Their [Gilman] website is a great resource, they have plenty of information to guide you before, during, and after the application process.”

