

**Undergraduate Recipients of  
Max Kade Travel Grants  
Summer 2019**

**Alicia Badea** took the 6-week semi-intensive German language course (A1) at Free University Berlin through their International Summer University (FUBis) program. The dates of her stay were from May 25 to July 5. The language class at the FU Berlin met three times a week for 6 hours each session for a total of 108 contact hours and the equivalent of 6 credits. Alicia reports that one day each week was devoted to learning and practicing German skills in the city of Berlin, through different hands-on experiences (museum trips, neighborhood tours, etc.). The assignments included a midterm and final exam, two oral presentations, weekly journals, and daily homework. The course was immersive, four-skills based, and covered the basic fundamentals of German grammar. Alicia completed the class with a grade average of 1,0 (US grade A). Alicia's progress in this one class was so significant that she went from having no German to enrolling in Intermediate German at Johns Hopkins this academic year.

**John Frye** interned as a business analyst at a medical technology company in Winsen, Germany. He was tasked with determining why the company was experiencing low margins and struggling to keep up with foreign medical device manufacturers despite its product pipeline's superior quality. John interviewed employees as well as KOI's and international clients by travelling to Belgium, Italy, Austria, and France. From these meetings, he determined that one of the company's largest issues was an outdated product management system. He developed a strategy that incorporated electronic document signing, GANTT charts, and an internal messaging and project management software into the company's SAP system. The internship ran from May 31 to July 31.

**Sophie Celeste Haas** interned at the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems in Stuttgart from June 1 to August 20. The work has had a profound influence on her studies in engineering at Johns Hopkins.

**Winona Liao** participated in the Euro Music festival and academy in Halle from July 16 to August 18. Winona is a pianist and the exposure to international performers and an international audience proved to be invaluable.

**Danmin Liu** I attended the summer program at Humboldt University at Berlin from July 22 to August 16. She completed two courses in that time a German language class and a creative writing course. She achieved her goal of reaching B1.2 competence by the end of her stay. In addition to her studies, she attended a literature salon, visited several museums and other attractions, went to performances, and made many new friends. She writes, "This was truly an amazing experience. I am very grateful that I had this opportunity."

**Ann-Alice Tichá** took two courses at FUBiS — Law, Society, and Politics in a Comparative Perspective and Semi-Intensive German C1. She was in Berlin from May

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25 to July 6. She had initially intended to take a B1 class but did so well in the placement exam that the program put her in the Advanced CI sequence. The class on Law, Society, and Politics was taught in English. In addition to her coursework, Ann-Alice went on many excursions and got to know German culture on a deeper level.

**Caroline West** used her Max Kade grant to fund travel to Berlin, Germany in July 2019. While there, she conducted interviews with Syrian and Iraqi tour guides affiliated with the Multaka Project, a collaborative initiative founded in 2015 by Berlin's German History Museum and Pergamon Museum to promote the social and cultural integration of newly arrived refugees. Her research centered on the ways this *Willkommenskultur* initiative is countering right-wing xenophobic rhetoric, its success in promoting the acceptance and inclusion of refugees, and how it interacts with ongoing debates in Germany about social and cultural diversity. Drawing from interview insights, her final paper for this project emphasizes the contested and fraught meaning of integration, the ways in which inclusion efforts are hampered by the rigid racial boundaries of German identity, and the complexity of empowering refugees while relying on logics that often center their helplessness. Her project was supervised by Dr. Ilil Benjamin, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology here at Johns Hopkins.

**Yiyang Xu** took an intensive language course in the International Summer University of the FU Berlin (FUBIS) from May 25 to July 6.

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**Audrey Adams** interned with the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce, International Business Department, North American Division. During the internship, she attended meetings with the Berlin Business Angels, went to panel discussions on Brexit, met with a delegation from China, translated a letter to the European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, Günther Oettinger, talked at length with a Brandenburger journalist about race in America, stepped into a virtual reality machine in Babelsberg, and learned about the social conventions that uphold international trade relations. Over the course of the summer her confidence in her German soared. Outside of her internship, she visited Copenhagen and Poznan, attempted swing dancing along the Spree, swam in a pool inside the Spree, spent hours reading at her favorite park (Engelbecken), and went to meet ups. She had the following to say about her summer experience:

This internship would have been impossible without the Max Kade Summer Travel Grant. I feel particularly fortunate to have spent my summer learning. I do not know when the next time I will be able to use my German regularly is, but my new knowledge of business German has certainly made this skill more marketable. I was able to rent an apartment in Berlin Mitte, which enabled me to have a wonderful cultural experience, while working in a completely new field in Potsdam. I literally learned something new everyday. I am certain that my time in Berlin this summer has made me a better student and a more independent, well-rounded person.

**Bridget Chen** spent 6 weeks in Heidelberg this summer doing an internship at the DKFZ (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum) at Heidelberg University under principal investigator (PI) Dr. Hannah Monyer, who is the director of Heidelberg University's department of Clinical Neurobiology. Evidently Bridget made an extraordinarily positive impression on her summer mentor. Dr. Monyer was so enthusiastic about Bridget's work that she sent the Max Kade Center at Johns Hopkins a note expressing her admiration for the student: "Bridget was actively engaged and had intellectual curiosity to learn the complex mechanisms of interneurons in the brain. She also interacted frequently in German to advance her language skills. We were happy to have her in our team."

**Tess DeBerry** enrolled for six weeks at the Freie Universität Berlin. She took a German language class that met 3 times a week for 6 hours a day. Every week, her class would take a field trip to a new area of Berlin. For example, they went to a co-op in Kreuzberg, the Käthe Kollwitz Park and Memorial in Prenzlauer Berg, and the Oranienstrasse Synagogue in Stadt-Mitte. In her spare time Tess explored Berlin, learning to navigate the public transportation system on her own and improving her German communication skills. She also spent time in numerous museums, where she enjoyed seeing many of the works of art she had studied in her art history classes at Johns Hopkins. Tess had the following to say about her time in Berlin:

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I loved my time in Berlin. I am currently in intermediate German at Hopkins and I felt like I came back this semester with an advantage. Being around native speakers, helping teach my roommates German grammar, and intensely studying the language, allowed me to converse with Berliners, experience the culture, and solidify my knowledge of the language. Because I want to specialize in German art in graduate school, knowing the German language is crucial and I feel as though being in a cultural center like Berlin for 6 weeks, I truly got one step closer to fluency.

**Alex Kaplan** took a course at the Humboldt University in Berlin on the dynamics of the European Union. The course entitled “The European Union Between Supranational Integration and National Sovereignty” was taught by Dr. Timo Lochocki. It emphasized the balance between large and small countries in the European Union, the importance of domestic politics in the large states for the future of the EU, and possible future trajectories for the institution. Classes were on average 4 hours, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, and Friday mornings for over 4 weeks. Assignments included regular readings on the historical basis of the European Union, and analyses of different relevant contemporary EU issues in scholarly publications. Topics included the past and present position of Germany as a leader in Europe, populist parties in western Europe and their effects on broader European cooperation, the Eurozone crisis, and EU fragmentation and Brexit. Alex delivered an oral presentation on Germany in Europe today and wrote his final paper on the sub-regional cooperative efforts of the Visegrad Four to pursue collective interests on the European stage. The class generally focused on the crucial position of Germany in European history, its present influence in the EU system, and future potential as a regional and global leader. He received a grade of A- for the class. During his stay in German he also visited Nuremberg and Bremen, where he stayed with German professionals to learn about their fields. These experiences provided a diverse image of urban Germany and the different opportunities and obstacles present in academia and the media.

**Sebastian Mendez** attended the annual meeting of the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies in Berlin this summer. Over the course of five days, he listened in on poster sessions given by various researchers and graduate students and attended lectures given by leading neuroscientists, Dr. James Knierim from Johns Hopkins. In addition to the conference, he participated in a seminar held at the Berlin Museum of Medical History, in which both scientists and historians gave their perspectives on how the work of such German figures as Helmholtz, Freud, and others shaped the medical environment in the late 19th and early 20th century. The speakers noted that the novelist Marcel Proust created his characters based on the psychological literature of the era. In his spare time, Sebastian toured Berlin, visiting the Reichstag, the Holocaust Memorial, the East Side Gallery in Friedrichshain among other notable sites.

**Serena Wessely** held a research position at the Ludwigs Maximilian Universität working in the Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry. Her work synthesizing structures utilized in vaccine synthesis against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* was situated at the intersection of organic chemistry and biochemistry. Currently, vaccine synthesis research is focused on taking the carbohydrate capsule structure of the bacteria and linking it with a peptide to

have a greater immune response. She followed this process when synthesizing the carbohydrate, a disaccharide from a Glucose bound to a Galactose through a 1-4 alpha bond, and the amine linker to bind it to the peptide. The disaccharide she synthesized was specifically designed from the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* Type 8 capsule structure. Once she completed binding the carbohydrate to a peptide, she tested the efficacies of these vaccine candidates. In addition her lab work, she also immersed herself in German culture. She visited several cities in Germany and beyond. Regarding her summer experience, Serena writes,

The Max Kade Travel Grant allowed me to open the door to so many experiences this summer by funding my cross of the big Atlantic. Without it, I would not have been able to understand my career path and dream for my future as clearly.

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**Audrey Adams** took a semi-intensive B-2 course at the Free University of Berlin's Summer University (FUBiS) from June 2nd to July 15th, 2017. The coursework improved her grammar in both spoken and written German. She also enjoyed the field trips built into the course They included: a visit to the grounds of Tempelhof airport and the community garden established there; a tour of the Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz, as well as a tour of a film museum; and finally a trip to the Maxim Gorki theater to watch the play "Das Kohlhaas Prinzip."

**Frederick Durham** worked in the microbiology lab of Prof. Erhard Bremer at the Phillips-Universität Marburg from May 31 to August 9, 2017. During his stay he researched osmotic shock in *Bascillis subtilis* with the PhD student Laura Teichmann, who was instrumental in training him to construct particular proteins in a lab setting.

**Adam Katwan** studied German with the Deutsch in Deutschland program at Deutsch-Institut Berlin. He attended an intensive introductory German course, which met five days a week for six weeks from July 2 to August 11, 2017. At the end of the course he was a certified A1-level German speaker. Adam plans to return to Germany next summer to continue studying the language.

**Richard Kelsen** stayed with a host in Berlin, while attending a German language course at the deutsch-institut. He took an advanced level class that involved a mix of reading, listening and speaking exercises and practice, 3 hours a day. At the end of the course he received a certificate testifying that my German had indeed improved to a C1 level.

**Chaconne Martin-Berkowicz** is an aspiring filmmaker and over the summer she researched how films made during the Weimar Republic still have cultural relevance today, especially in their depiction of and relationship to women. At the Berlin State Library and theFilm archives at the Deutsche Kinemathek she studied primary source

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material that she included in her senior thesis. In particular she looked at articles written in film magazines published 1921-1922 that were geared towards female readers, such as advice columns.

**Sofia Verheyen** attended the second term of FUBiS's summer program from June 3 to July 15, 2017. She enrolled in the B1 intensive German course there, which is being counted as a language practicum by Johns Hopkins.

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Summer 2016**

**Amelia Clarke** took two courses over the summer at the Free University Berlin. The first was “Resilience and Transformation” (taught in English) and the second “Zeiten und Orten” (taught in German). In the “Resilience and Transformation” course, the students were asked to select an individual to analyze how living in Berlin impacted their lives using the latest sociological and psychological theories. Her chosen subject was Dr. Ingeborg Rapoport, a pediatrician who worked at the Charite Hospital in former East Berlin. In the second class “Zeiten und Orten”, she studied the history of Berlin and Germany from 1871 to the present.

**Lucas Feuser** took two courses at the Free University Berlin this summer. One was a semi-intensive C1 language course that enriched his already considerable German language skills. The other was a class on post-reunification German Cinema. As part of the class, he studied the layout, architecture, history, and lifestyle associated with the city and deepened his appreciation and affection for this remarkable place.

**Demitre Gweh** took the C1 intensive German course at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich in July. The class consisted of two parts: a project seminar and a language course. In the project seminar, students developed a plan to interview some of Munich’s inhabitants on a specific topic of their own choosing. Demitre chose to study the eating habits of Germans and interviewed about 20 people. She compiled the answers she received in an oral presentation. The course was crucial for improving her knowledge of German language and culture.

**Lily McCarthy** interned at the Ifo Institute-Leibniz Institute for Economic Research at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Her internship was in the Center for Energy, Climate and Exhaustible Resources. She was responsible for organizing presentations on current events for the center’s weekly meeting. Additionally she assisted doctoral and postdoctoral students with their research, writing reports on recent studies and helping with drafting of articles for the in-hour journal *Ifo Schnelldienst*.

**Kasthuri Nair** had an internship at the Institut für Molekulare Medizin in Düsseldorf. She worked at a lab specializing in autophagy and apoptosis research. Her immediate supervisor was Dr. Björn Stork, a well-known scientist in the field of autophagy research. In assisting master’s and doctoral students with their projects, she learned many invaluable skills for her own future academic work in biology. These skills include: western blotting, retroviral transfection, cell cultures, sequencing, and FACS.

