

Brandon Penrod

Gilman International Scholarship
Alumni Ambassador
Brazil, 2019



“Study abroad, no matter where, opens your heart and mind to unforgettable experiences and people that inevitably shape your future path for the rest of your life. It makes everyday moments of cross-cultural connection feel special. Be brave, take a leap of courage, and explore. Study abroad is for all of us!”

During his time in Brazil, Brandon focused his studies on learning the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture. After 3 months of study, he moved from beginner to advanced-low on the ACTFL scale. Brandon used his language skills across various settings to better understand Brazilian geopolitics, history and medicine. He also mustered up the courage to try surfing, capoeira and Brazilian cooking.

Following his Gilman Scholarship experience, Brandon graduated from Loyola University Chicago, worked with AmeriCorps and taught ESL virtually. He also worked as a Bilingual Health Promoter in Canada, promoting Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders services to targeted vulnerable communities in Toronto and Montreal. Brandon is currently pursuing a master’s degree in International Affairs with a concentration in Global Health and Human Rights from Pennsylvania State University. He plans to pursue a Juris Doctor/Master of Public Health dual degree program and work in the global health field before entering the Foreign Service and, hopefully, serve in Brazil.

- Received the Gilman Scholarship while attending Loyola University Chicago, where he studied Political Science, International Studies and Neuroscience
- Previously studied abroad in Thailand as a Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Abroad Scholar
- Connected with his LGBTQ+ identity through a different cultural lens and enhanced his understanding of the LGBTQ+ experience in the Lusophone world
- Speaks French, Italian, German, Thai, Portuguese and Turkish, and is beginning to learn Mandarin

20 YEARS
★ with **Gilman**

