

Max Courval

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Portugal, 2019



“My experience learning Portuguese abroad in Lisbon, Portugal, was not the end point; rather, it was just the beginning in my academic, professional, and personal journey.”

Max studied abroad at Universidade NOVA de Lisboa in Lisbon. His time in Portugal enabled him to fully immerse himself in Portuguese language and culture, leading to significant growth in linguistic fluency and intercultural competency. Max’s time in Lisbon allowed him to achieve advanced fluency through immersion. After concentrating on Brazilian Portuguese, studying abroad in Portugal exposed him to the broader Lusophone world.

- CLS – Portuguese
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Portuguese
- Two-time CLS Alumni Ambassador

After he returned home to Arizona, Max received a certificate of proficiency of Advanced Low on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages’ (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview. Upon his graduation from Arizona State University in May 2020, he continued to progress as a two-time recipient of the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS). Through this program, he participated in a virtual Portuguese language institute in Florianópolis, Brazil, in 2020 and 2021. Max is now pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies, with a focus on Brazil and Portuguese language, at the University of Utah. His graduate studies were made possible by the university’s Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, which funded two years of his degree as well as an intensive and immersive summer abroad in São Paulo, Brazil, where he studied Portuguese language and conducted research on colonial Brazilian history.

Today, Max is a passionate advocate for the transformative power of education abroad. Before his role as a Gilman Alumni Ambassador, Max served as a two-time CLS Alumni Ambassador and as a Resident Director for the 2023 CLS Portuguese program at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Max currently works as a faculty-led coordinator at the University of Utah’s Learning Abroad. In the future, Max hopes to use his Portuguese language skills by serving as a consular officer at an embassy or consulate abroad in the Lusophone world.

