

In a concisely written statement, please describe your past and present work as it relates to your intended field of study, your educational objectives, and your career goals. In addition, please include your intellectual and professional reasons for choosing your field of study and why your studies/research can best be done at the Graduate School of Arts and Science at NYU.

My interest in history began at a young age when I began reading children's historical fiction books. Books like *American Girl* and *Magic Treehouse* allowed me to travel with the characters to new places and learn how life was different in the past. I imagined myself as being a character in these stories, and thought about the ways in which I would live and act that were different from my modern life. As I began to take history classes, I realized that my lessons in class were no different from the stories that I immensely enjoyed as a child. While there were more dates and tests, the content still essentially told stories of people living their lives during other time periods and in different places. The excitement that I felt about the historical stories of my childhood only increased with my advancement of my history classes throughout the rest of my schooling.

This interest in history shaped my academic career in college. I began by taking a variety of historical classes across a multitude of geographical locations and time periods, while simultaneously studying related disciplines. I spent several years learning Italian and appreciated discovering more about the country's culture, both modern and historical, as well as the reciprocal influences that history, language, and culture have on each other. I found that my expertise in Italian helped me in my history classes, enabling me to read primary sources in the original language and take note of the exact words used. As I continued to take courses in art, language, and religion, I could see evidence of the ways in which significant events of the past shaped people's lives, and how these changes were reflected in various aspects of their culture. Having a diverse approach in classes related to history helped to broaden my understanding of each time period.

When I studied abroad in Florence, Italy, I discovered that I was extremely interested in the history of Medieval Europe and Renaissance Italy. At the International Studies Institute, I took classes in the history of Italian design, historic preservation in Italy, and visual culture in Florence. All of these courses helped me develop a deeper understanding of the culture and events of the past, all while experiencing in-person the art and architecture that we discussed in lectures. On a trip to the Vatican, I noted the clear importance of art, architecture, and religion during the Renaissance; this was particularly notable in the Sistine Chapel. In reflection on this experience, I realized that the passions of the people during that time period still significantly impact the culture of modern Europe. At the Vatican, I saw collections of art composed of pieces that have been brought together from other places throughout Europe, demonstrating that the stories of Medieval Europe and Renaissance Italy were intertwined. In order to fully understand one region and time period, one must also have knowledge about the other. I decided that I wanted to continue my learning in Medieval Europe and Renaissance Italy professionally.

I began to serve as a research assistant at the University of Connecticut, where I worked closely with Dr. Garcia in her work on humanism in the Italian Renaissance and European cultural history. As her assistant, I compiled relevant documents for her to review for manuscript preparation and upcoming academic publications. Contributing to her body of work and historical scholarship intensified my intellectual curiosity and inspired me to pursue further research professionally. I greatly admire the impact that Dr. Garcia has on her students due to her passion for history and commitment to research. In the future, I would like to mentor other history students in the future as a professor to promote the same excitement for the subject. I also completed an archival internship at the Connecticut Historical Society, where I worked to electronically catalogue their collection of manuscripts. Working hands-on with primary

documents excited me and reminded me of how I felt when I saw historic art and architecture during my time abroad. I had previous experience working with electronic versions of primary documents, but seeing them in their original state was another experience entirely. This reminded me of the excitement I felt when I saw the historic architecture and art while studying abroad. History is not just in books, but accessible all around us. Each of these opportunities gave me insight into professional careers and practices in history, and I determined that I wanted to continue my education at a higher level. Through a combination of research, archival work, and courses in multiple disciplines, I strive to become a History professor in Medieval and Renaissance Europe and to professionally continue my research.

I think that New York University's History Ph.D. program with a concentration in Medieval and Renaissance Studies closely matches my academic and professional interests due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program. My experiences taught me that this framework for a diverse study of the time period and geographic region is essential to understanding this part of history. I am particularly interested in researching the intersection of religion, art, and culture in the Medieval and Renaissance eras, specifically how they differently affected Italy and the broader European region. I am very interested in Dr. Smith's work on identity and material culture in the Middle Ages and in Dr. Lee's research on perception and art in Renaissance Italy. It appears that their research interests are similar to mine, and that their guidance would support me in achieving my academic and professional goals. I hope to become a part of New York University, and look forward to further discussing my research and experiences with the department.