



Image Credit: NASA/ESA

As I was looking through the Texas A&M study abroad site for funding for my Greece engineering ethics study abroad this May, I found the Globetrotter grant page. The Globetrotter mission inspired me to expand my travel horizon beyond my study abroad. Above is a beautiful picture from the International Space Station of lower Europe: the Alps, Mediterranean, Greece, and Italy. I chose to start this application with an expanded view as it reminds me, and hopefully you, that no matter how much we see, there is always more to see.

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A Texan Abroad

“I’m not from Texas, but I got here as fast I could.” As a Texas native, I grew up hearing this all my life, never thinking about how it affected me. With a family that traveled very little, I never had anything that really spurred the desire of travel in me. I never understood why people wanted to go spend a semester abroad, everything I wanted or needed is here, somewhere in Texas, right? Wrong. Slowly, through the course of my college career, I learned the value of traveling and seeing other places by making friends who enjoyed traveling, but never very far or for extended periods of time. Then, last summer I took a leap of faith. I accepted an internship abroad and worked in Veracruz, Veracruz, Mexico for two months. Those two months were the best two months of my life – from seeing an entirely different culture with different focuses and societal norms to being immersed in a country whose national language is not English. I have never learned as much about myself as I did last summer; all by looking through the lenses of a different set of cultural values than those found here in the United States.

After last summer, I have had a burning passion to travel and see as much as I can. Since I have been back, I have been traveling across the U.S to every football away game, visiting friends who have graduated and moved across the country, and taking time to go on trips on my own. An example of the effort I have made to continue traveling, I will be going to Qatar over spring break to visit Texas A&M Qatar. I have gained this opportunity as I am currently a team lead for the Texas A&M Hullabaloo Team in the SpaceX Hyperloop competition. Because of my hard work for the Hyperloop competition and the generosity of Texas A&M, I will be spending my spring break presenting our design and exploring Texas A&M’s campus in Qatar.

As my education comes to a close at Texas A&M, I will be completing my degree by taking engineering ethics this may in a minimester in Thessaloniki, Greece and then returning to graduate in August. Luckily, I’ll still have time after my study abroad ends before I need to come back for graduation and as I will already have paid for a plane to ticket to Greece, I want to take the opportunity to travel more. I want to see all of Greece as well Italy this summer. I have picked to further travel in these two countries not simply because I am studying abroad in Greece, but because in high school I received a classical education based on the culture of both of these countries. This background heightens my desire to see some of the most influential

starting places for Western culture; Greece and Italy. My study abroad will cover some areas of Greece, but I want to ensure I explore all parts of Greece and taking a trip through Italy will be a natural progression through history from Greek to Roman times, seeing the architecture, geography, and atmosphere. The modern day culture of these countries will also help to better understand the world that I live in and be a full circle of my education as it comes to a close when I graduate in August.

Travel Plans

June 2nd: Study abroad ends, say goodbye to Thessaloniki as I get on a train to Athens

June 2nd-6th: Athens exploring! During the day, I plan on visiting the Theatre of Dionysus, the Acropolis of Athens, the Parthenon, and Anafiotika Plaka (Neighborhood of the Gods). During the evening I plan on visiting the Mikrolimano Marina in Piraeus and local places as suggested by the owner of the local hostels

June 7th: Sparta visit – here I will see as much of ancient Spartan, such as the Statue of Leonidas, and even try my hand at Spartan training.

June 7th-8th: Crete – birthplace of the Minoan civilization and home of Knossos Palace along with some beautiful landscape, namely the Matala beach and caves near Heraklion.

June 8-9th: Naples – I would stay the night in the city of Naples and visit the city of Pompeii and Mt. Vesuvius during the day on my way to Rome. Time is built in for the long ferry and train ride from Crete to Naples.

June 10th – June 12th: Rome – Take a train from Naples and spend the next three days exploring one of the greatest cities in history. I plan to see the Colosseum, Hadrian's Villa, St. Peter's Square, Trevi Fountain, the Colossus statue of Constantine, and finally Vatican City.

June 13th – June 14th: Florence – After exploring Rome, I will take a train to Florence and spend the next two days visiting the Fountain of Neptune, Great Synagogue, Basilica Di Santa Croce, Uffizi Gallery, and Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral.

June 15th – June 16th: Venice – In my final city, I would visit Venice where I would plan to visit Piazza San Marco, Scala Contarini del Bovolo, and the Grand Canal. Catch train to Rome that night.

June 17th: Leave from Rome airport and fly back to the Houston International Airport.

With my travel plans laid out, I need to make sure all of my financials are in order and that I can go on the trip. My study abroad to Greece will cost around \$6000, including a flight to and from

Greece. I have just received a position as an undergraduate grader for MEEN 361 and expect get around 20 hours a week. At \$10 an hour with and about 12-13 weeks of grading, I am expecting \$2500 from this job. I am also expecting a tax return of around \$2000, from a combination of my co-op I worked in the spring and internship over the summer. I have around \$1500 saved from both of those work experiences and the rest of my earnings have been spent on paying tuition and rent for the past year and a half along with my travels I have taken since returning from Mexico. Between my tax return, earnings as an intern/co-op, and working as an undergraduate grader I should have enough to pay for my study abroad. So any traveling after that I will need help financing, which is why I am applying for this Globetrotter Grant. Below is a rough cost estimate for my Greece and Italy trip.

	Per Diem	Total
Hostel Cost		\$ 455.00
7 Nights - Greece	\$25	\$175
8 Nights - Italy	\$35	\$280
Food Cost		\$ 600.00
3 Daily Meals - 15 Days	\$30	\$450
Extra/Expensive Meals - 15 Days	\$10	\$150
Eurail Pass		\$ 296.00
8 Travel Days for 2 Countries		
Taxis and Ubers		\$ 350.00
Entrance Fees		\$ 200.00
Incidentals/Extras		\$ 150.00
Extra funds for emergency cases		
Grand Total		\$ 2,051.00

The Globetrotter Grant would cover most, if not all of my trip after my study abroad! Since I will already be paying for a flight to and from Greece for my study abroad, the extra funds from this grant would allow me to vastly increase my culture leanings this summer as I will get a better sampling from Greece and Italy. This trip would be an amazing closing statement to my time at Texas A&M and I believe that I will best maximize the funds from the Globetrotter Grant while also embodying the mission statement of Globetrotters: “helping students realize their globetrotting dreams.”