



2009-2010 Fulbright Competition

Congratulations on your decision to apply for a Fulbright Grant! The application process is a complicated one, and the materials in this packet are intended to assist you as you complete your application.

We particularly recommend that you review the How-to-Apply section of the Fulbright website, read archived applicant newsletters and listen to the extensive collection of podcasts available on the Fulbright site.

The majority this packet has examples of successful Fulbright proposals and personal statements as well as tips from writing centers, both at UT and elsewhere.

So, go ahead and apply! Make use of Laura's office hours (every Friday from 2-5) or call 512-471-6490 to schedule an appointment.

Below is a schedule of deadlines and workshops.

Date	Event	Required?
August 6 from 1-3	Writing Workshop	Optional
August 14 from 1-3	Writing Workshop	Optional
August 20 from 1-3	Writing Workshop	Optional
September 3 at 5:00	Campus Deadline	Mandatory
September 15-26	Campus Interviews	Mandatory
October 17 at 5:00	Final Submission	Mandatory

Best of Luck!

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Useful Web Pages

<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/howtoapply.html>

In this section of the Fulbright website, you will find a copy of the application as well as detailed instructions for the different parts of the application.

<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/podcast.html>

Fulbright has created an extensive catalogue of podcasts where you'll find advice and support for completing your application.

http://us.fulbrightonline.org/howtoapply_tips.html

Here you will find a goldmine of useful tips on writing your statements and securing an appropriate affiliation.

<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/program.html>

Go here to find the most up-to-date information on participating countries and grant requirements.

http://us.fulbrightonline.org/thinking_applicant.html

The applicant newsletters provide a wealth of advice and detailed information to create a successful application.

<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applynow.html>

Go here to start your application!



Personal Statements

General advice for developing content and structuring your essay:

- Start with a dramatic or intriguing opening to get the reader's attention, but don't tantalize people. Resolve all cliffhangers and answer any questions you raise.
- Build a connection with the specific school/program you're seeking. How will it help you meet your career and academic goals? Why not attend some other school?
- Demonstrate insightful thinking by analyzing your experiences and your decision-making process. A well-described success or failure can leave a powerful impression.
- Make an argument. Explain what sets you apart from other applicants. What unique qualities, skills, and experiences would you bring to the program?
- Paint a picture of your experiences with vivid details and one or two colorful anecdotes.
- Offer concrete examples from your life and specifically describe your goals and dreams.
- Muster the courage to take calculated risks, but support your claims with evidence.
- Clearly articulate a sense of what you value.
- Show that you have a realistic understanding of the field you want to enter.
- Write honestly; don't include only what you think the committee wants to hear.
- Don't be self-congratulatory; project confidence without arrogance.

Stylistic and proofreading advice:

- Answer the prompt directly and memorably while adhering to word or page limits.
- Be selective and concise. Don't simply narrate your resume. Omit extraneous details.
- Choose your words carefully. Avoid gimmicky quotations, vague language, clichés, cuteness, and overly fancy vocabulary.
- Showcase your personality, but use humor cautiously; you might offend your audience.
- Show drafts of your statement to several readers. Get as much feedback as possible.
- Check your final draft for mechanical errors and typos.



UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER

Personal Statements - Resources

General

- <http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/virgil/?q=node/7>
Virgil, created by our UWC consultants here at UT Austin, simulates our collaborative writing consultations. Helps with personal statements and much more. We're always adding new sections and tweaking our advice, so place us on your favorites list and keep visiting!
- <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/apessay.html>
The University of Wisconsin at Madison Writing Center includes general advice about each step of the writing process—includes special help with an essay's introduction.
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_perstate.html
A page from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). Includes sample essays and tips from admissions officers at prominent schools.
- <http://web.psych.washington.edu/writingcenter/writingguides/pdf/personal.pdf>
University of Washington's Psychology Writing Center's advice for their undergraduates. Includes humorous and helpful examples of some of the common mistakes writers make.
- http://www.phikappaphi.org/ObjectAssets/FileLibrary/1/0/sample_personal_statements.pdf
This file from Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society shows how you can emphasize various strengths or interests in an essay—your inspiration, future goals, research experience, etc.

Fellowships and Scholarships

- <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/FS/essays.html>
From Worcester Polytechnic Institute for writing scholarship applications. Includes links to helpful articles on scholarship applications.
- http://www.willamette.edu/dept/saga/applicationprocess/personal_statements/index.htm
From Willamette University for writing scholarship essays. Includes help with personal statements and advice from prestigious fellowship committees.

Pre-Law

- <http://www.deloggio.com/personal/statemnt.htm>
This site for the DeLoggio Admissions Achievement Program targets pre-law students “outside of the mainstream” (including underrepresented minorities and nontraditional students) but may help applicants seeking admission to other types of graduate schools.
- <http://www.accepted.com/law/sampleessays.aspx>
Sample essays from Accepted.com to show you successful approaches for the law school personal statement.

Pre-Med

- <http://www.bestpremed.com/essayedge/lesson1.htm#article>
“Illicit” advice (not really) from a former pre-med/med student. Includes an external link to useful articles about med school personal statements.
- <http://www.temple.edu/healthadvising/medman.html#PERS%20STMNTS>
Additional tips for personal statements from Temple University's Health Professions Advising Center. Also has great general advice for pre-meds.

STATEMENT OF PROPOSED STUDY Ghana/GH/AF, Engineering Cultural and environmental issues in engineering a defluoridation filter

As populations continue to surge, the ecological footprint we create rapidly increases in size and importance. Supplying the resources necessary to sustain human life while not overextending the earth's capacity for renewal is a central problem of the 21st century. More than 70% of the Earth's surface is water, 97% of which is salt water. Of course, the usable fresh water does not appear when and where we wish, but rather is unevenly distributed. While the population continuously grows, our lack of potable water sources now strands more than one billion people worldwide without access to safe drinking water.

Currently, my graduate research explores sustainable water treatment processes with a specific focus on methods for removing excess fluoride from drinking water. The development of this research stems from my brief visit to Bongo, a remote region of Ghana, Africa. The naturally occurring fluoride levels in the aquifers of Bongo exceed the World Health Organization (WHO) standard of 1.5 mg/L, but not by much. While the levels reported in this region range from 2-6 mg/L, this contamination is great enough to cause mottling of the teeth and concentrations in some wells are approaching levels that could cause bone deformations in children. When newly drilled wells and boreholes (hand-pumped wells) exceed the WHO standards, the water source is capped and thus rendered unusable. The problem with this solution is that the community loses the water source and the money spent to purchase and build the borehole. This proposal aims at tracking and defining the physical, social, and cultural parameters surrounding the issue of fluoride contamination in the drinking water of the Bongo District.

The first objective of my research is to catalog and map the wells in the Bongo District in coordination with the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) and the District Water and Sanitation Agency (DWSA). The Bongo District is approximately 175 square miles in area, equivalent to twice the land area of Manhattan, thus enabling me to travel between sampling points by bicycle. This survey will include testing fluoride concentrations and recording GPS positionings of both useable and capped sources. In order to move through the Bongo District and sample wells without causing the communities alarm, I will accompany Faustina Awane, the community communications and health advisor at Bongo's DWSA office, on her regular community visits during my first days, thus introducing me and my research to the communities. Using Geographic Information System (GIS) as well as other hydrologic modeling software, I will create a comprehensive, geographical map of the cataloged water sources. I am interested to see the paths fluoride travels through and between aquifers. I plan to bring a handheld GPS unit and a sampling probe to assist in the completion of this task. During the current academic year, I will complete graduate courses in GIS, Groundwater Contamination and Pollutant Transport, and Drinking Water Treatment, all with this first objective in mind. After the map is created, I will work with the CWSA hydrologists specifically tasked with borehole placement and with Gilbert Amoah Ayamgah from CWSA Bolgatanga to delineate fluoride contamination patterns. This map could potentially help the hydrologist and the community to avoid drilling new water sources in highly contaminated corridors. An additional benefit would be to see if the contamination patterns change between the rainy and dry seasons.

My second objective, to be accomplished through conversations with Professors and engineering students at Kumasi's Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

(KNUST) and conversations with CWSA and DWSA, is to learn about Ghanaian civil engineers. By coordinating with Francis Momade, KNUST Provost of the College of Engineering, I will meet the KNUST students who have recently begun addressing the fluoride contamination issue. Our research, while on the same topic, cannot escape being framed through the eyes of our educational background. I want to discuss my work in comparison with theirs in the hopes of creating a lasting collaboration between our institutions. I will also engage in discussion with the engineers at CWSA and DWSA to learn about their professional approach to water treatment and contamination monitoring. I am interested to see if my American trained engineering approach contrasts theirs when addressing common engineering topics.

I will also observe how the CWSA trains and works with community members after a new borehole has been installed. Each borehole has a local guardian who is responsible for maintenance and reporting when new parts are needed. The level of care and devotion of these local guardians is very high and I am curious to observe the training methods employed that instill these levels of pride and care. For me, it is important to understand the level of detail these courses teach in order to return to my graduate research knowing appropriate levels of complexity for a filtration technique. Through observing these training courses, understanding the teaching methods, and by analyzing the level of comprehension attained by attendees, I will better understand and be able to define “appropriate technology” for myself.

My final objective is to learn about water usage patterns in this community. After lengthy discussions with Faustina Awane, I have learned that little is known about the pattern, frequency, and efficiency of water usage in her community. I wish to conduct an in-depth study of how her household uses water and how households drawing from the same source ration their water. This ethnographic research will help me to understand the required design parameters for an effective “sustainable” treatment and how water usage patterns vary when the water becomes scarce during the dry season. This survey will entail my recording the time and quantity of water buckets retrieved throughout the day. I will perform this count for at least seven consecutive days during the rainy season and again at the height of the dry season for comparison. If appropriate, I will ask a select few to keep a detailed log on how the water they collect is rationed (i.e. washing, cooking, drinking) and the number of members in their household. If I feel this would be inappropriate, I will only perform this detailed water log with Faustina and her family. Through the surveying of households I also hope to gain an understanding of people’s reactions and feelings about the fluoride problem and what they consider an acceptable filter or solution.

The terms “sustainability” and “appropriate technology” are the types of labels that the developed world often gives to technology introduced into developing regions, but rarely are these systems designed in coordination with the end user. As populations continuously increase and potable water sources shrink in comparison, the ability to design within existing social and environmental boundaries is essential to sustaining life. The lasting impact engineering imparts on a community, both positive and negative, must be understood. This research would create a diversified research team of an American engineer, African engineers, and community members to focus on the fluoride problem in Bongo; however, we will also learn about and from each other. This research will allow me to push myself beyond conventional practices and to develop into the socially, culturally, and environmentally conscious engineer that I hold as the model of success.

PERSONAL STATEMENT, Ghana/GH/AF,
Engineering

The life of an urban dweller is a patchwork of sorts. You may live in one square of the quilt but be unaware of surrounding swatches. My patch was Brooklyn—a patch buried within the dense urban quilt of New York City.

Nature was never immediately outside my door; it was something my family had to consciously make a day of. We would pile into the subway and ride for hours to finally arrive at a tiny piece of nature, only it was neatly quarantined within the limits of the surrounding urban landscape. While many people remember recesses filled with playgrounds and grass, my memories are of a parking lot bordered by a two-story tall chain link fence. These stark, well-defined boundaries ruled my daily existence. Nature, to me, was always enclosed by a fence, a wall, or a sidewalk; it existed only tucked between folds of concrete. Longing for more natural areas, I developed a distaste for the rigidity of my urban habitat.

While studying civil engineering I continuously attempted to deconstruct conventional engineering applications and blur these divides, but my engineering education upheld the traditional theories of compartmentalization. In water treatment and distribution classes I was taught to design large plants--central locations fenced off to the community, often unbeknownst to the urban dweller turning the faucet to gather water. When my studies presented an opportunity to write a prescription for combined sewer overloads, an actual urban illness caused by overdevelopment, mine was the reintroduction of nature through an extensive implementation of green roofs. After the project ended, I continued on to co-author a paper on the applicability of low-impact designs in urban settings. Frustrated by the lack of research and literature on how to easily integrate green roofs into current engineering design theory and equations, I conducted hydrological tests on green roof planting material. Currently, I am working on publishing these findings with the purpose of aiding engineers in the New York Tri-State area with this integration.

Immediately after graduation I traveled to Ghana and found myself instinctively questioning where this developing nation drew the boundary between the constructed and the natural. While observing Ghanaian life, I discovered that often the natural landscapes overshadowed the constructed, and at the center of life was the community. I witnessed a society where urban congestion, the natural environments, living spaces, technology, and the community are not a separated patchwork, but rather are woven to become a more vibrant cloth. In more rural areas, my reaction was that the constructed environment, including technological infrastructure, did not define the boundaries of life, but rather coordinated with the natural and cultural realms already in existence.

Engineers are often stereotyped as being human calculators, unreceptive to the social parameters surrounding the project at hand, crafting quilts with squares organized into grids preventing any overlap. In many aspects, regions of Ghana seemed to be the photonegative of the large city situation where underdevelopment, nature, and the community could define the face of technology. This curiosity motivated me to return to graduate school and explore how water treatment and purification can occur under monetary and chemical-resource limitations. My current experience as a graduate research assistant for a NSF-funded project on global research ethics will help me further shape my research by examining the cultural impacts filtration infrastructure imparts and what ethical responsibilities an engineer has to the community. Thus, I will continue to map the existing boundaries between nature, the built environment, and culture.

Statement of Proposed Study

India, Creative Arts, Painting

Sacred Home

Art and life in India are inescapably linked. Everyday objects bear the marks of sacred decoration, and pigments carry holy connotations. As a cultural communicator, I create paintings as a tangible way of understanding how we experience the world, both real and spiritual. Immersing myself in the culture of India, I will study the diverse ways Indians relate to and inhabit their homes and public spaces. Contrasting historic havelis with rural villages and the new, gated communities of the growing middle class, and studying the practice and meaning of the earthy home-painting arts of Indian women, I will improve my ability to communicate ideas of space and domesticity in my own work. In a world growing more closely connected by technology, trade and media, my interest in traveling to India is less a search for exotic differences than for shared experiences.

The extraordinary art of India can be generally divided into two strands. One is done, historically, by men, nurtured by the patronage of the wealthy and powerful and rooted in religious traditions. The other is done mainly by women, rooted in everyday life and folk traditions. My primary reason for traveling to India involves the study of art forms that are traditionally “women’s work,” specifically the *kolam*, *alpana*, and *mandana* traditions, interrelated but varied forms of ritual decorations practiced by Indian women. I am interested in these lesser known, but equally valuable, painting traditions because they parallel my interests in domesticity, decoration, and the sacredness of the home. Since this work is inherently site-specific and the process ritual, it is imperative that I experience the home made sacred in the time and space in which it is conceived.

My nine months of study in India will center around a rigorous studio and painting practice in Jaipur, one of the nation’s artistic centers and home of the University of Rajasthan, the Indian state’s oldest university. I look forward to meeting a network of contemporary artists through the University, sharing my work and process, and learning about their art. I will study introductory Hindi through the American Institute of Hindi Studies, based in Jaipur, as a way of beginning to understand the language, connecting with a larger network of scholars at the Institute, and as an important tool to aid my creative research in rural areas. Informing my studio practice and study will be pilgrimages throughout Rajasthan and around Madras, and Calcutta – home to the *mandana*, *kolam*, and *alpana* traditions of ritual decoration, respectively – to meet with traditional artists and observe and practice these forms of home painting.

The *kolam* tradition is practiced most widely in the rural villages of Tamil Nadu during the months of December and January. Geometrical threshold patterns — secular and religious, magical and philosophical — are created outside the home from a mixture of rice powder and water. The designs are eventually eaten by neighboring animals in an act that connects the house to the life outside it, embracing a Hindi spirit of sharing with all living beings. The ancient *alpana* floor decorating tradition is centered in Eastern India, where designs were traditionally made for wish fulfillment, specifically fertility and safety, and were accompanied by days of fasting. Today much of the religious aspects are lost and *alpanas* are created to celebrate ritual events such as weddings and engagements. The *mandana* tradition, based in rural Rajasthan, is a practice of decorating the walls of the home with geometric designs sprinkled with imagery from everyday life. During the Hindu New Year, in March, these designs are created as celebrations. Home walls are decorated using the simple materials of red sand and chalk powder, transforming the home itself into a work of art.

Statement of Proposed Study

India, Creative Arts, Painting

Sacred Home

While these sacred Indian home-decorating practices all have unique histories, they are also part of a global, female tradition of crafting decoration within and for the home. My interest in these Indian art forms grows out of my work with traditional decorative art practiced by American women.

In America, a young country that prides itself on moving forward, words like *tradition* and *history* can seem out of place. Yet these histories exist, and in my work I explore collective memories and lost traditions through the lens of the home and home decoration. For my own work, I have studied vintage *Good Housekeeping* manuals, records of community quilt-making and instructions for hand-painted floor cloths, in an effort to understand and speak of a feminine, and often personal, home decorating tradition. In my most recent series, *House Painting*, I built large images of period domestic interiors using paint, pattern and found fabric (see Supplementary Materials). These works are large and immersive, acting like portals into a familiar but upset world where imagined and lived realities are intertwined. In the series, decorative pattern operates both as meditative and menacing elements in the rooms, sometimes offering order and relief, at other times challenging the eye with an aggressive boldness that demands attention.

I see the acts of women creating home decorations — in India and America — not just as formal art and design, or as housework, but as a ritual process connected to a long, diverse, and evolving history. In India, I am specifically interested in observing how women's art-making traditions are adapting to the changing culture.

My exploration of lived environments extends beyond the interior of the home to the study of corporate architecture, the design of public spaces and the shape of the natural landscape. For this reason, the city of Jaipur serves as a fascinating and appropriate base for my studies. Jaipur is a city where the past and present coexist. It is at once a prized heritage city, a center for traditional arts-and-crafts, and a quickly growing industrial center with a booming economy. Founded in 1727 and built according to the Hindu architectural concept of *vastu vidya* and geometric planning, Jaipur is one of the world's first (and best) planned cities. Living in the Pink City presents an opportunity to experience a timeless example of master planning that continues to remain relevant in an advancing culture.

Through the creation of a body of work that is cross-cultural in nature and committed to finding inspiration in the intersection of necessity and spirituality, I look to broaden my understanding of art, society, and self. I anticipate having many opportunities to share my work in India, and, upon returning to the United States, I will have an exhibition of paintings at the *Women and their Work* gallery in Austin, Texas, where I have been awarded a solo show in 2009. This exhibition will be a way to directly share my work and experiences with others, facilitating an international dialogue. Opening up my own practice to new communities both in India and the United States, I will emerge as an artist with an enriched artistic vocabulary, a global citizen speaking of a varied but connected world.

Personal Statement India, Creative Arts, Painting

I grew up in the upstate New York town of Saratoga Springs, a Victorian spa resort whose motto, “Health, horses and history,” announces its glamorous origins. My family’s Empire-style home, built in 1836, exemplified the cloudy mingling of reality, culture and history that continues to inform my work today. Victorian architecture embraced not only the connection between interior and exterior decoration, but also the design of everything from furniture to rugs to silverware, generally believing that all things necessary to life should be made beautiful. Yet, the Victorian era — as it is understood through literature, religion and philosophy — was a time of doubt, brought about by a quickly changing era of industrialization and historicism. In my paintings, I explore the contradictions of bourgeois longings, the clash between the reality of everyday life and the histories that we invent and cling to, as exemplified by the contradictory Victorian era. My immersive, large-scale canvases contain disjointed images – of contemporary and historic rooms inexplicably installed as if in a single home – that balance representation and abstraction. Melding the public and private, the handcrafted with the anonymously mass-produced, I create paintings that are connected to history and to my experience as a woman in America.

If my hometown presented one store of images, my experience studying in Italy gave me an insight into the relationship an individual or a society could have with public art. In Italy, I made regular visits to Lorenzetti’s 14th century masterpiece, “Allegory and Effects of Good and Bad Government,” commissioned by the original government of Siena and installed in the Palazzo Pubblico. The fresco, depicting both visionary and corrupt societies, detailed the everyday actions and roles of its citizens. Experiencing the “Allegory” in the space it was conceived transformed the fresco from a static image into a public symbol connected to the history and social fabric of Siena.

Taking lessons from my childhood home and “The Allegory,” I strive, in my own work, to bring art and architecture, history and community, into meaningful dialogue, creating paintings that complicate space, and installations that transform galleries into domestic environments.

This convergence of home and decoration is at the center of the home-painting tradition, practiced by Indian women, which I intend to study. While scholars recognize the richness and complexity of these traditions – the geometric *alpana* designs are studied by computer scientists – they are also largely personal rituals, passed down from generation to generation and created for private audiences. I am eager to pursue my creative research in the feminine traditions of home arts in India, and to deepen my understanding of the relationship between ritual and life. A year spent in India is an opportunity to catalyze my creative growth, share my art-making process and make lifelong connections. In the future, I look forward to continuing my artistic practice, seeking new challenges in life and in the studio, while pursuing a career teaching at the University level.