Essay 1:

The Arabic language and the Middle Eastern region struck my attention in high school during the religions unit in a world history course. The importance of religion in the Middle East and the importance of Islam in the Arabic language are highly relative to the study of Arabic as a whole. Islam is a fascinating religion that has unfortunately been associated with terrorism in the United States. However, this ignorant thought is one belief I and many others, including President Obama, have openly rejected. I am interested in learning more about the role of religion in Middle Eastern politics.

My first year in college, I enrolled in a course on the politics of the Middle East because I was interested in learning more about the currently turbulent region that was once the birthplace of civilization. In this course we examined why the Middle East is one of the most volatile regions in the world. We discussed the effects that politics, religion, economics, and international relations have had on the history and current situation of the Middle East. It was an enlightening and engaging course and I am taking its supplementary course, called the State and War in the Middle East, during the Spring 2010 semester.

For me, the Middle East is a fascinating and extraordinary region because of its long, tumultuous history. I am intrigued even further by both the ominous *and* optimistic prospects that lay ahead for the Middle Eastern region. These factors sparked my interest to learn Arabic. Arabic is not only a beautifully spoken language but it also very famous for its artistic and intricate script. During my study of Arabic I hope to also improve my Arabic calligraphy and explore the unique Arabic and Islamic architecture.

Essay 2:

 The intensive study of Arabic in a country where it is natively spoken will be a tremendously educational experience for me in my future endeavors. It will give me a better understanding of both the language and the unique culture that I have read and heard so much about.

I am currently studying cultural anthropology and my future plan involves participant-observation field work in the Middle East. Specifically, I would like to study adolescence in the Middle East. After taking a course called the Anthropology of Adolescence I have recognized the importance of researching adolescents in a rapidly changing world. Adolescents make up the generation that could have the most influence on the political, economic and social aspects of the future, especially in the Middle East. As a part of my research I plan to study the effects of war, a conservative religion, and a changing culture on child development and adolescence. To develop good rapport with the people I wish to study I need to be able to speak and understand their language and specific dialect; this is especially important when working with adolescents. Anthropological fieldwork requires that the anthropologist not only observes the target group but also is integrated into the culture he or she is studying.

In the field of International Studies I would like to do further research on why joint political and economic institutions, such as the European Union, fail in the Middle East. This research would include studying the internal and external efficacy of the Arab League and eventually lead to conclusions that could allow the formation of joint institutions. To get the people’s perspective in these regions I need to be fluent in Arabic. Thus, the study of Arabic, which is the official language of the Arab League, is an integral part in my career plans for the future.

Essay 3:

From a very young age, I have been able to adapt well in social situations. I am sociable and energetic in even the most diverse group settings. Because I handle stress well, I project my optimism and amicability, which allows me to befriend people very quickly.

In 2008 I auditioned for a band and choir program called American Music Abroad that brought students from around the country to perform in small venues across Europe. This experience familiarized me with experiencing different people in foreign settings. I only spent four weeks with those musicians but we shared incredibly emotional moments throughout the trip.

During the Summer of 2009, working at Cradle Beach Camp, a camp for disabled and disadvantaged children, was one of the most eye-opening experiences for me. It was a twenty-four hour job and up to sixteen of those hours were spent awake and alert, looking after children. I worked with rude and sometimes violent children from the inner-city as well as children who have physical and mental impairments. Most of the campers came from vastly different backgrounds than me and I learned a lot from them. Despite their negative and debilitating attributes, I loved these unlikely campers. There is an underlying unity among all people, no matter where they come from or what adversities they may have faced.

I am an avid traveler. Within the US I have visited many states, which often have unique cultures. Internationally, I have traveled through many countries in Europe and in India. I am familiar with being in cultural situations that I am not used to in the States. These have given me an insight into what life and culture is like in other areas of the world. I am not only prepared but excited for the rigorous and immersive learning experience that CLS will offer me.