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.