

MARSHALL SCHOLARSHIP



**PROPOSALS & PERSONAL
STATEMENTS**

**MARSHALL
SCHOLARSHIPS
2015**

PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Candidates should describe below their proposed academic programme, giving reasons for their choice of course and preferred university. Those hoping to read for a research degree should give an outline proposal of the research they wish to undertake. If any postgraduate study has already been undertaken, state briefly the field, and list any theses or dissertations written or published.

Name of Candidate: _____

A recent National Public Radio story headline reads, "The Experts The Ebola Response May Need: Anthropologists". This article illuminates the ongoing necessity for an anthropological perspective and the ways that anthropologists bridge the gap between a community's culture and aid. Without cultural understanding, dissonance will remain and unfortunately, lives will be lost. Social Cultural Anthropology considers cultures and how its bond is essential to development efforts. The School of Oriental and African Studies, The University of London's (SOAS) program in the Social Anthropology of Development is unlike any other program because of SOAS's specialization within the African region and the UK's distinct social anthropological approach. Its unique mission directly aligns with my life's work, and I am intrigued by the opportunity to work with publishing academics who have the flexibility to draw upon an interdisciplinary epistemology. Pulling from a diverse range of scholars whose work critically assesses and analyzes Sub-Saharan Africa, I would be provided with a breadth of knowledge allowing me to uniquely engage social anthropology.

By engaging social institutions and their effects on developing communities through an anthropological perspective, I will enhance my understanding of anthropology and it will serve as a bridge to my Ph.D. in sociology. In the UK, social anthropology is the dominating paradigm. Understanding the social anthropological approach is essential to understanding how social statuses and roles, groups, institutions and their interrelations impact development instead of simplifying anthropological analysis to just cultural implications.

SOAS combines scholarship, disciplinary expertise, and regional focus to create a nucleus of knowledge that is matchless within the UK and the world. It provides students with the support to not only understand the anthropological perspective of development, but also to conceptualize the ways that anthropologists meaningfully help the 'bottom billion'. This funnel-structured program allows me to explore the key debates within African development through a unique and humanistic way--a way that bridges the gap between 'planners and their beneficiaries'.

Through this program, I hope to gain a better understanding of social institutions in Sub-Saharan African and its impacts on development efforts, and engage theory pertaining to tourism, the identity of practitioners and their host communities. While I am excited at the possibility to work with SOAS's entire faculty, I am particularly interested in Dr. Naomi Leite and Dr. John Campbell's work on diasporic communities'. The ways in which Leite's work challenges prevailing assumptions about the conceptualization and exploration of tourism through remembrance, belonging, diaspora, imagination, and surrogacy is a refreshing and unique perspective. As a development practitioner, Dr. Campbell, critically analyzes the various motivations for migration across Africa and the ways that development and multinational organizations can strengthen their relief efforts by considering the complexities facing the migrant. I am excited by the possibility to blossom from their wealth of knowledge and strengthen my own research.

As a development practitioner and aspiring agent of change, I will use this opportunity as a sturdy foundation to provide the necessary expertise to bridge communities and aid efforts.

Signature

Date

**MARSHALL
SCHOLARSHIPS
2015**

PERSONAL STATEMENT

This should be a short statement (NOT MORE THAN 1000 WORDS).
Candidates should describe his/her academic and other interests and
pursuits.

Name of Candidate

I recall the sun beaming on my back as I shielded my eyes from the sand that I kicked as I crossed the unpaved road to Nowawe High School in Tshabo, Eastern Cape, South Africa. I thought I was headed to the school for a regular day of volunteering, but on this particular day I walked into Nowawe principal's office not as a volunteer but as an opportunity in an under-served school. I could barely say "Hello" before he escorted me to a classroom filled with students and to my surprise, left me there to teach the history of the Cold War. As the class progressed, one student, Thobela raised her hand and uttered the most profound, yet simple words, "I can't get an education because I don't trust the teachers with my mind". I later learned that Thobela's teachers were a combination of ex-patriots, government workers, and South Africans. They all had one aspect in common; they did not come from nor live in Tshabo. They came with their own perspectives of the children of Tshabo and their own approaches to how they should be taught. As I inquired more about the student and community's concerns about their only school, I found that there was a lack of respect for the Xhosa culture and more importantly the teachers did not know how to engage the Xhosa students. The economic and political infrastructures were there, but the school and teachers lacked the cultural capital to truly impact Tshabo in a way that could incite meaningful change. If development policy does not take into account communities' cultural implications, it leaves one to ask, who really pays for development? There is a disconnect between development agendas and the people in which they want to serve. My life's work is to bridge this gap through scholarship and service.

Similar to Tshabo, understanding a community's culture is essential to the success of a development agenda. In my home community, Chatham, a predominately black, working-class area on the South Side of Chicago, the local schools are under-funded and under-resourced. I was inspired by my family's dream that I would be the first college graduate in my family and every morning for six years, I traveled on one bus and two trains to receive a quality education. Many Chatham residents aren't able to share my same story, and they are limited to the resources available in this 2x2 mile radius. While there have been initiatives to improve local schools, they failed to engage parents who were more concerned with feeding their families than going to town hall meetings. Even though going to school in a corrupt-South Africa may dwarf my realities on the South Side of Chicago, these experiences parallel each other. My community did not need to be saved but we were capable of unprecedented growth if we were provided the relevant tools that addressed our current needs. Understanding how individuals interact with social institutions that operate in a community is essential to sustainable development efforts.

My efforts to seek communities' needs have led me to utilize education as a powerful tool for development. As a volunteer at KIPP Strive Academy, a middle school in the blighted West End neighborhood, Atlanta, GA, I recognized a disconnect between the young black male students and their understanding of college. In response, I began My Brother's Keeper (MBK), a mentorship program that broadens the horizons of young males by maximizing their potential. MBK exposes them to the realities of college and importance of education. The fruits of my labor have been successful: My Brother's Keeper has impacted over 60 young men and been supported by Brooks Brothers, the Bonner Foundation, and Morehouse College. The program continues to flourish as we approach our fourth

year. Most importantly, the format of the program addresses issues such as manhood, identity, and the disenfranchisement of black men, topics that have been identified as relevant and important to the development of this community. Yet, they have been strategically packaged through platforms such as field days and activity-based mentorship programs to encourage student participation.

There can be no effective implementation of civil and political rights unless the cultural requisites that contribute to cross-cultural dialogue are recognized. Until cross-cultural dialogue is achieved, true development will never be attained. I am passionate about facilitating this dialogue through my research and scholarly efforts. My research broadly explores the intersections of identity, privilege, and race and these notions of volunteer tourism and their contribution to the development schema. In an effort to spark cross-cultural dialogue between young black Americans and South African change agents, I've designed a digital dialogue platform, which is currently awaiting response for funding from the Laura W. Bush UNESCO grant. These conversations will serve as catalysts for critical thinking, leadership development and community action in student's respective communities.

It is because of my community, racial identity and neighborhood that I have developed such a work ethic and the reason that I am fulfilling my potential. Society often assumes that these aspects of my identity debilitate my growth, yet these aspects of my story are reasons that I have become more resilient and determined to seek change. Whether it is Cape Town, Chicago, or Atlanta, I've realized the importance of creating opportunities for dialogue. I am committed to empowering communities rather than silencing their desires. The Marshall Scholarship will be essential to me realizing my goals as a scholar-practitioner in the development field by engaging social institutions. Moreover, it will help me explore questions surrounding identity, volunteer tourism, and education as a tool for development. This opportunity enables me to hone my research interests and gain invaluable exposure to theories within the field of Social Anthropology of Development. The Marshall Scholarship would provide me with financial support and a community of diverse scholars who strive for academic excellence, and it would only help strengthen me as a vessel for change.

Signature

Date

**MARSHALL
SCHOLARSHIPS
2010**

PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

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Name of Candidate:

Our world cannot be bifurcated as we are greater than a series of socially constructed categories. Thus, the discourse on International Relations must extend beyond the traditional dichotomies of western vs. nonwestern, developed vs. developing, and first world vs. third world. I seek to attain an MSc in International Relations at the Royal Holloway College of the University of London and an MSc in Global Governance and Diplomacy at the University of Oxford as these academic programs demand that these dichotomies be deconstructed. As one who seeks to shape foreign policy, I must be trained to employ an international hermeneutics in which the focus is not division based on sociopolitical/economic difference but rather an acceptance of global interdependence.

This training will begin with a Masters of Science in International Relations to be completed at the Royal Holloway College of the University of London. This program is intended to assist students in mastering the theoretical rudiments of International Relations. It provides the foundational knowledge crucial for those, such as myself, who seek to work in the field of international diplomacy and governance.

This program requires that students take a compulsory course in Theories and Methods in Politics and International Relations which explores the nuances of politics and inter-state relations, dissecting how those interactions are shaped by the spectrum of cultural, social, and economic values within the international community. Royal Holloway College also allows students to select choices classes in their area of interest. If afforded the opportunity I intend to take Issues in United States Foreign Policy, The Politics of Ethnic Multiculturalism, and Foreign Policy of the European Union. My objective is to understand the inner workings of the international community, specifically the role of the West, and use this understanding as a basis for efficacious diplomatic praxis.

Upon completion of my MSc in International Relations I will continue my training at the University of Oxford pursuing an MSc in Global Governance and Diplomacy. This program seeks to equip students for work in diplomacy by analyzing the inner-workings of inter-state relations and multilateral efforts.

This program requires that students take courses such as Diplomatic Practice which investigates international and/or regional issues and their effect on diplomatic efforts. The goal of said analysis is to provide students with the practical knowledge critical in properly addressing these issues. In addition, students must take Methods for the Social Sciences to assist them in future research and data analysis. These classes in conjunction with courses such as International Diplomacy and International Relations of the Developing World will not only encourage probative study but foster a solution-oriented analysis.

I seek an education that will systematically deconstruct all notions of division and bifurcation while fostering the formation of a new internationally based praxis. I see a MSc in International Relations from the

Royal Holloway and a MSc in Global Governance and Diplomacy from the University Oxford as an indispensable part of this education.

Signature

Date

PERSONAL STATEMENT

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Name of Candidate:

It was almost as if she sang the words, "You product genocide." Uttered again with a perverse and painful ease she demanded, "Ariel, do you understand that you are the product of a genocide?" I was impotent and so I sat. I sat there sheepishly, attempting to conjure up a response that could both rationalize her words and assuage my guilt. Pained by the silence, I sat feckless as my shame slowly suffocated me. To her the question had been innocuous, and yet to me it had proven debilitating. For in my mind the words that she spoke, "youproduct genocide," inevitably morphed into the dictum which I had come to live by, "you are guilty." The reality: she, my mother, was a child of the Biafra war, a witness to the genocidal massacre of our Igbo people, a Nigerian refugee; whilst I was a child of western opulence, a beneficiary of immense and varied resource, a daughter of privilege. Did I understand? The answer, quite simply, was no.

I was five when I heard the first story; she was five when the nightmare first began. She was five years of age when she watched her house burn to ash after a bomb exploded in the middle of her village. She was six when she attempted to revive her two year old cousin as starvation raped him of his last breath. She was seven when she walked forty miles in two days seeking refuge from the blood thirsty militia. She was nine when the physical abuse commenced and thirteen when she narrowly escaped it. She was eighteen when her father disowned her. She was twenty when she was homeless. She was twenty-six when she had me, her daughter, and by then all she could do was tell the story. While all I could do was listen. As I developed so too did the stories, each rendition laden with more painful detail. Yet, in my paradigm the war, starvation, despair, and want remained fictitious, rudiments of pseudo reality which I could never truly understand. It only grew louder, "You are guilty."

By twenty, it was deafening. Like a muffled knell, subtle yet assiduous, it echoed through my mind. Until one day with the utterance of a complete stranger it was muted. Silenced when his voice boomed, "How are you dealing with the survivor's guilt?" His words lingered, "I mean as one who survived Hurricane Katrina how are you coping with the guilt?" The auditorium was subdued by the discomfort that enveloped us. We waited; the activists, the grassroots organizers, the professors, the heads of various NGOs, and I waited for her response. The elderly woman cleared her throat as she wiped a lone tear from her cheek and stated, "No guilt. Guilt doesn't do nothing but confuse. I just remember. If you don't acknowledge the failure of the past you can't protect the future!"

All in the auditorium applauded. As they rose to their feet I, once again, sat befuddled. Staring catatonically at the folder in my hand I inspected its cover "The People's Hurricane Relief Fund: International Tribunal on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita." I sat, desperately gazing at the words as if in them I could find understanding. My thoughts were relentless. How could she not feel guilty? A series of mere stories had transformed my entire life into one protracted quest for exculpation. My mother witnessed genocide. I served as a regional coordinator for Africa Action, mobilizing college students in the Southeast United States in the fight to end the genocide in Darfur. My mother was a refugee. I worked as the legislative intern for the U.S. Human

Rights Network analyzing United States policy to protect the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons in America. My mother was once homeless. I toiled in the office of Congresswoman Maxine Waters working with the subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity to draft legislation that would eradicate poverty and housing inequity. My mother, despite it all, survived. I had spent my entire life attempting to allay my survivor's guilt. And yet, here was this eighty-two year old survivor of Hurricane Katrina who once sat helpless in a wheel chair watching her granddaughter drown. She felt no guilt. Perhaps then, neither should I.

Her words were not meant to condemn but to catalyze. I now realize that my mother told me of her past not to induce guilt but to insure that I would work to "protect the future." I can now unabashedly proclaim that I speak from a position of privilege. And with great privilege comes great responsibility. The moment we realize that what for one is a mere story is another's suffocating reality, we are responsible. The reality: human history has been tainted with egregious stories of war, destitution, inequity, and oppression. And still we must, employing the privilege afforded to us, work to "protect the future."

It is for this reason that I must attain a Masters of Science in International Relations at Royal Holloway College of the University of London and a Masters of Science in Global Governance and Diplomacy at the University of Oxford. My experience in analyzing federal and international policy, community mobilization, and drafting federal legislation must be undergirded with the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge. In order for me to be an effective leader in the international political arena, I must first understand the international political system. If I am to use my talents, I must first be properly educated.

"Ariel, do you understand that you are the product of a genocide?" I understand that while we are the products of our history we are also the producers of our future. The atrocities of our past need not determine the trajectory of our present. A mother's nightmare need not destroy her daughter's dream. Finally, I understand.

Signature

Date
