

2015–2016 ROEPKE UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Study Abroad Scholarship

Spring 2016: Edison Orellana Sustainable Field Expedition in Costa Rica

Thanks to the Roepke Study Abroad Scholarship, I was able attend a 2016 spring break trip to Costa Rica as part of the course ESE 389: Environmental & Sustainable Field Expedition. There was a lecture component; but we also hiked, took farm tours, snorkeled, did bat mist netting, and had some free time to experience the local culture. Each of these activities touched on aspects of sustainability, the environment, and conservation. Of the many places we went and people we met, my favorite experience was a guided nighttime tour of the Children's Eternal Rainforest, in Monteverde.

Our guide imparted amazing facts about local flora and fauna, and showed us a perspective on the environment that I had never considered before. As we turned off our flashlights and paused on the trail to listen for all the layers of sound, he pointed out that every part of the musical scale is represented in the rainforest, so that no creature is drowned out by another. We did the rest of the hike without flashlights; which gave me an appreciation for how nocturnal species use their non-visual senses.

For the course's final project, I used hemispherical photography to compare the degree of canopy cover in four forests we visited during the trip. This project allowed me to use skills I learned in GEOG 477: Introduction to Remote Sensing, such as R, the statistical computing language. For results, and more details about my project, I have it linked at my website, edison.me.

Winter 2016: Joshua Silic Disaster Recovery in Japan

I received a Roepke Study Abroad Scholarship to attend a Disaster Recovery study abroad trip in Japan, during the 2016 winter break. It was whirlwind of activity, as we visited nine different cities in two weeks, averaging ten hours of walking per day. In every city, we saw how different areas of Japan face different problems, such as tsunamis on the northern coast and earthquakes in the southern areas. It was interesting to see how every area uniquely dealt with disasters, such as raising an entire town by a meter to reduce future tsunami damage



or putting gigantic pendulums in skyscrapers to steady them during earthquakes.

I was amazed to see that every city we visited is designed with disasters in mind. Many have designated earthquake gathering areas, with portable toilets that connect directly to the sewage system, and easily assembled makeshift housing, to name a few examples. It was not until I traveled abroad that I realized that the way things are done in the U.S. are not “just the way things are,” or the best way.

Gaining these valuable perspectives, and seeing so much of Japan had a large impact on my academic trajectory—I decided to return to Japan for an intensive summer language course, and am looking for post-graduation jobs that incorporate GIS, Japanese language skills, and travel to and from Japan.

Junior/Senior Research Scholarship

Fall 2015: Nathan Leadbetter, Jacob Jasek, and Jessie Wang Municipal Interactions in Melbourne

Nathan, Jacob, and Jessie worked with Dr. Julie Cidell on a project concerning local government, urban sustainability, and social networks of institutions in Melbourne, Australia. They gathered data from municipal reports and strategies concerning sustainability issues, including water, energy, climate change, and biodiversity, and compiled a spreadsheet to determine which cities interact with which other cities, as well as state and federal governments and non-governmental organizations.

Spring 2016: Joshua Silic Researching Historical Maps of Africa

I worked with Dr. Thomas Bassett on a mapping project, to see if there is any overlap in political boundaries on maps drawn by African tribes, and those later drawn by French *Cercles* (colonial administrators). Since it is based around historical maps, I have learned a lot about projections and older geographic coordinate systems. I was also completely unaware that there was such a thing as a “Paris meridian” until I realized that the maps I had georeferenced were off by 2.33 degrees. Not only did I gain technical skills in learning how to correct this, but I also became aware of the assumptions that I unknowingly make when I look at a map, such as Greenwich being the zero line of longitude. It made me realize that maps are more fluid than I had previously thought, and can change rapidly over the course of a few years.

Roepke Undergraduate Academic Scholarship (Freshman/Sophomore)



Scott Constantine

My deep-rooted love for maps and geospatially-oriented problem solving has led me on a fascinating academic journey, which is ongoing as I continue my studies as a Geography & GIScience major. I am studying both the fields of Geographic Information Science and Geology, and have spent the last two semesters

and the summer of 2015 as a research assistant using GIS to analyze spatial LiDAR data of riverbeds, specifically those of the Trinity River in Texas, as well as

the Chehalis and Columbia rivers in the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, in Spring 2016, I began working as a Geospatial Analyst Intern at Agrible, a cutting-edge technology company in the Champaign research park uniting GIS with agricultural data. The Roepke Scholarship has been immensely helpful in furthering my academic and professional goals.

Siqi Deng

I am fascinated by cartography, GIS, logistics, transportation, and remote sensing; and hope to learn more about them through geography research opportunities, courses, and internships. The Roepke Scholarship can definitely help me engage in these activities as I work toward my degree. ✨



Announcing the Evans and Judith Mank Undergraduate Scholarship

The Department of Geography & GIScience received a generous gift from Evans and Judith Mank to endow a scholarship for undergraduate student majoring in Geography and GIScience. The Evans and Judith Mank Scholarship will ensure access to higher education for well-qualified students in our field and support our department's continued excellence.

Thank you! ✨

Professional Science Master's in Geographic Information Science Class of 2017



Front row, from left: Ruoxin Li, Fik Winata, Stephanie Zhang, Wenhan Kong, Edmond Lai. Back row: Dale Lee, Det Yang, Daniel Zhang, Dr. Shakil Kashem-PSM Advisor, Hao Zhang, Xu Li.