



# OLIVIA GILLESPIE

## FULBRIGHT ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP TO BRAZIL

Olivia Gillespie's love of books and language began at a very early age.

"It started out as a hobby, then it became more of a love," said Gillespie, who is originally from Phoenix, Arizona, but now calls Woodbine, New Jersey, home. That enjoyment of language continued from childhood to The University of Scranton, where majored in English literature and minored in Spanish and theology and religious studies. She will share her passion for language during her Fulbright year in Brazil, where she will teach English at a university.

As part of her Fulbright experience, Gillespie, who speaks Spanish and Portuguese, hopes to further not only her English teaching skills, but also her Portuguese fluency, the official language of Brazil.

"It enriches English for me," said Gillespie. "Portuguese is just so beautiful and it is so similar to Spanish."

The Fulbright will give Gillespie the opportunity to immerse herself in a nation where nearly everyone speaks Portuguese. She also intends to take college-level Portuguese classes to strengthen this skill.

Gillespie's worked hard to be prepared for this next stage of her journey. At Scranton, Gillespie served as editor and editor-in-chief of *Esprit Magazine* and was a teaching assistant for a first-year contemporary English literature seminar, where she led classroom discussions. She has also been an English writing tutor, taught poetry workshops and tutored ESL students who, as their first languages, spoke Spanish and Chinese.

The University awarded Gillespie a President's Fellowship for Summer Research in 2015, through which she worked with Jones DeRitter, Ph.D., professor of English and theatre, to write a series of connected short stories for her project titled "Rewriting Time in the Works of Toni Morrison and William Faulkner."

Gillespie was also a semi-finalist in the Elie Wiesel National Ethics Essay Contest and won *Esprit's* Berrier Prose Award for outstanding piece of fiction writing. She will graduate in May as an English major with minors in Spanish and theology/religious studies. At commencement, she will receive the University's Prof. Joseph B. Cullather Award for Excellence in English (*ex aequo*).

The Fulbright will also give Gillespie the opportunity to immerse herself in Brazil's diverse culture. She intends to take cooking and dance classes and participate in community soccer and tennis clubs in order to learn and foster bonds with those in a culture that "treasures athleticism and creative expression."

After the Fulbright ends, Gillespie said she may embark on a different journey. She may volunteer for the Peace Corps or Student Conservation Services prior to pursuing a graduate school program in Latin American studies or law school.

"But I haven't ruled out education or English literature," she added.