



# Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) October 20, 2016



Tyler Blackwell, AM CMES  
Special Consultant to the  
Harris School of Public Policy  
UChicagoGRAD





- About me
- UChicagoGRAD
- GRADFair plug
- How do I make a competitive CLS application?



# About Me!

## **Tyler Blackwell, AM**

**Special Consultant to the Harris School**

**UChicagoGRAD, Career Development**

- Master's in Middle Eastern Studies from UChicago's CMES
- CLS in 2010 in Amman, Jordan
- Presidential Management Fellow at U.S. Department of State (worked on CLS and Fulbright)
- Foreign Affairs Officer in Office of the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace
- Founded nonprofit in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, Center for Arabic Language & Culture (CALC)
- At UChicago since September 2015





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# GRADFair plug...



Register today at [gradgargoyle.uchicago.edu](http://gradgargoyle.uchicago.edu)



# What is the CLS?



- A program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. However, it is administered by American Councils.
- Program objective: Broaden the base of Americans studying and mastering "critical languages."
  - 8-10 week summer program
  - Intense language study and cultural immersion abroad
  - Equivalent to one year of academic language study
  - Approximately 550 scholarships awarded annually in fourteen languages



# CLS Languages...

No prior language study required



Azerbaijani, Bangla, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Punjabi, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu

At least one year of prior study required



Arabic and Persian

At least two years of prior study required



Chinese, Japanese, and Russian



# Program benefits...

- Domestic travel to/from Washington, D.C. for the required pre-departure orientation
- International travel to/from host country
- Applicable visa fees
- 20 hours of class per week
- Housing and meals
- Cultural activities and group trips in host country
- U.S. academic credit through Bryn Mawr College





# Eligibility Requirements...

- U.S. citizenship
- Enrollment as an undergraduate or graduate student in U.S.-based university degree program
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have completed at least year of college-level study by beginning of CLS Program
- All backgrounds/disciplines are eligible



# Why Should You Apply?

- Advance your career goals and intercultural skills:
  - Rapid gains in a critical language
  - Experience on the ground in an important region of the world
- Make valuable connections in your host country and become part of a vibrant community of State Department alumni
- Supportive environment for first-time and experienced travelers alike

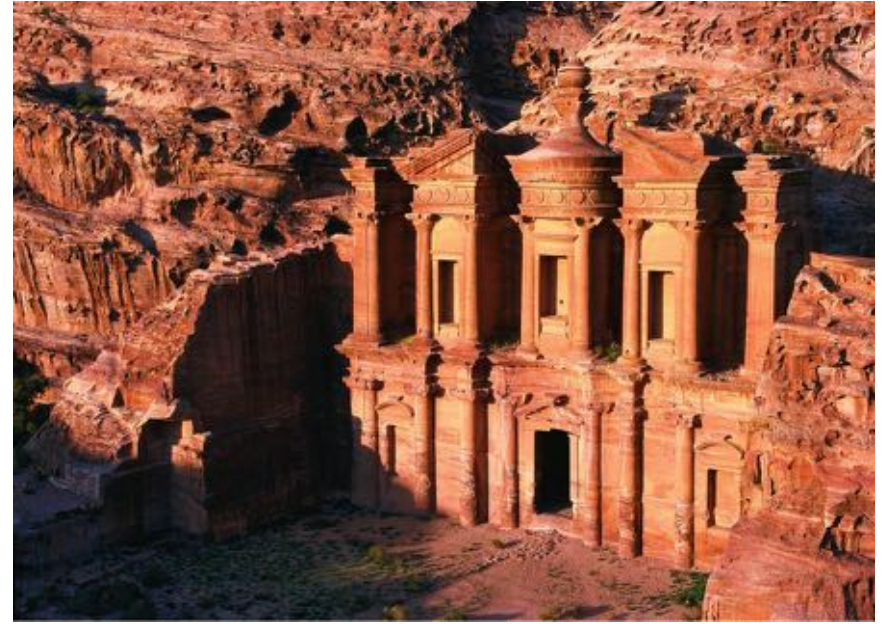


# In-Depth Learning Opportunities

- The CLS Program integrates language learning into:
  - Excursions to explore the cultural heritage of the host country
  - Elective cultural classes
  - Host family and language partners
- In 2016, CLS will introduced a new pilot program:
  - Specialized courses at some institutes, focusing on topics such as health, climate and energy, business, and entrepreneurship.
  - Courses incorporated language learning with field-specific opportunities.
  - Applicants who reach the second round of selection may indicate their interest to opt-in.



# In-Depth Learning Opportunities



# CLS is a “group-based” program

- Program sites range from cohorts of 5 to 35 students
- Everyone shares the same weekly schedule:
  - 20 hours of class
  - Cultural activities and local excursions
  - Weekend overnight group trips
- CLS is not a research, independent study, or internship program



# GRAD Gargoyle

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	Class (9:00-1:00)	Cultural Class	Study; free
Tuesday	Class (9:00-1:00)	Language Partner (1.5 hr)	Study; free
Wednesday	Class (9:00-1:00)	Cultural Class	Study; free
Thursday	Class (9:00-1:00)	Language Partner (1.5 hr)	Study; free
Friday	Class (9:00-1:00)	Free	Study; free
Saturday	Cultural excursion	Cultural excursion	Free
Sunday	Free	Free	Free

- 2 hours of homework/night. Curfew is at 10pm every night.
- Local cultural excursions take students to sites in the city on weekday afternoons or weekends
- Overnight cultural excursions
- Students may have only two or three free weekends



# An Opportunity Open to Everyone

- Supportive environment
  - Alumni network and mentor programs
- Open to all fields of study
  - Summer commitment only
  - Offers academic credit
- CLS actively recruits students from groups underrepresented in study abroad
- CLS is fully funded!



# Participant Diversity Snapshot (2015)



- Over 40% identify as students of color
- Students come from public and private institutions, community colleges, and minority-serving institutions
- Nearly all 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico represented
- A wide variety of fields of study, including 15% STEM
- 78% Undergraduate, 22% Graduate





# Students with Disabilities and Medical Concerns



- CLS does not discriminate on the basis of disability or medical condition.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider the challenges of program ahead of time.
  - CLS institutes are often in remote locations.
  - Public services for persons with disabilities and access to medical resources may be limited.
- Despite challenges, the experience can be extremely rewarding.
  - CLS makes reasonable accommodations necessary for participation in program activities, including cultural events, excursions, and host family arrangements.
  - Participants with disabilities have successfully completed CLS institutes in Russia, India, China and other locations.



# Application is live!



- Online application at [www.clscholarship.org](http://www.clscholarship.org).
- Apply for one language only
  - Not for a specific country or site
- Applicants must prepare:
  - Unofficial transcripts
  - Two letters of recommendation
  - Essay Responses

Deadline is November 16 at 7:00pm CST!



# Key Elements of a Successful Application

**Make a clear connection between target language and academic and career plans.**

Talk about:

- The importance of the language to your goals
- Your plans to continue studying and using the language



# Key Elements of a Successful Application

**Make it clear you can succeed in an intensive, group-based program.**

Discuss how you are:

- Ready for intensive study
- Ready for a highly structured, group-based program
- Culturally adaptable and mature



# Key Elements of a Successful Application

**Get good letters of recommendation:**

- Letters from faculty or instructors are preferred
- Ask early for a meeting and be polite



# Key Elements of a Successful Application

**Start your application early, and seek on-campus resources to help you improve your essays:**



- Office of Grants, Scholarships, or Fellowships
- Study Abroad or International Education office
- Writing tutor
- Academic advisor, language instructor or other faculty member
- Trade proofreading duties with a friend



# Questions?

[tblackwell@uchicago.edu](mailto:tblackwell@uchicago.edu)



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