



My Ball State Story

My name is Brittney and I am a third semester graduate student and graduate assistant in the Comparative Political Science MA program. I am currently working on my master's thesis, two conference papers, and PhD applications, but my academic journey started long before I arrived at Ball State. I moved around a lot growing up, but now call Indiana home, or at least my home base, as both my high school and undergraduate studies took place here. I have always been fascinated by travel, language, history, and culture, and it only made sense that studying comparative political science would follow.

When I was 15, I began taking biannual trips to Port-au-Prince, Haiti to work with an orphanage there, translating adoption documents between French and English, typing the stories and memoirs of the founder and director of the orphanage, bringing supplies, and, of course, playing with the children there. These trips taught me a lot about who I was and what I wanted to do in the future and also how important education, language, and travel would be to me. During my undergraduate studies at IUPUI, I spent a year in France going to the University of Strasbourg and I also had the opportunity to do an internship at the American Consulate in Strasbourg.

After completing my bachelor's degree, I moved to Germany to tutor at an International Baccalaureate High School and to take university classes and expand my language base. After a year in Germany, I came across an opportunity to teach English in Thailand. I had never been, but I met all of the requirements and was offered a job at one of the top high schools in the north of Thailand: Bunyawat Witthayalai. I taught 7th-12th grade English speaking and writing and helped with English Club and English-centered field trips.

While in Thailand, I realized that while I enjoyed teaching, teaching K-12 was not my forte. I had been debating going back for graduate school since completing my undergraduate degree, but Thailand was the push I needed. I started applying to graduate programs while in Thailand, which was tricky at times given the time difference and unreliable internet, but Ball State invited me to their program and offered me a graduate assistantship.

Since being here, I have grown as a person and as an academic. The professors here have so much wisdom to impart and take the time to really get to know every student if you give them the chance. I have taken classes in research methods, comparative politics, European politics, and done an independent study. Dr. Frankland, Dr. Nishikawa, and Dr. Hall are absolutely incredible professors as well as some of the sincerest individuals I have ever met. This department is full of wonderful professors and I have learned so much while being here. I am in the midst of applying to PhD programs and have so far been accepted to IU Bloomington's doctoral political science program, but since I have not heard back from all my schools, I will wait to make a final decision. Ball State and my professors and this department have helped me immensely on this academic journey and I cannot imagine having gone anywhere else for this experience. (Spring 2018)