This summer I interned for Senator Bob Corker for his Senate Foreign Relations Committee office in Washington, D.C. Senator Corker, a Republican from Tennessee, is the chairman of the prestigious committee, and I enjoyed gaining first-hand experience working on issues of foreign policy, politics, and learning more about the legislative process.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee was established in 1816 and charged with facilitating conversation and debate about the United States’ position abroad. Throughout its history, the committee has been instrumental in developing and influencing United States’ foreign policy and navigating the country, and the world, through times of war and peace. The committee has considered, debated, and reported important treaties and legislation, varying from the purchase of Alaska in 1867, the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, and the creation and implementation of the Marshall Plan in 1948.

My responsibilities varied by day, but I did have several predictable obligations. One of my favorites was the weekly Tennessee Tuesday morning breakfasts. Every Tuesday, while Congress is in session, Senator Corker and Senator Lamar Alexander host Tennessee residents in the D.C. area. This is an opportunity for Tennesseans to meet their senators, ask questions, and stay informed about the issues Senators are involved in and the state of US government at large. Another one of my favorite responsibilities was the ability to attend committee hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee hearing room. These hearings were wide ranging from Corruption, Violent Extremism, Kleptocracy, Dangers of Failing Governance.
(which focused on Africa), Global Efforts to Defeat ISIS, U.S. Policy in Libya, Barriers to Education Globally: Getting Girls in the Classroom, and Russian Violations of Borders, Treaties, and Human Rights. These hearings were a great opportunity to learn more about pressing subjects in national and international affairs and offered a great insight into the how Members of Congress and their staff learn more about topics and hear valuable insight from experts who testify. I also had the unique opportunity to help set up for these hearings and take notes for Corker staff members.

As an intern, I attended meetings on and off the Hill, drafted memos and press releases, tracked legislation concerning the Senator, his staff, and the Committee, and conducted independent research projects. I wrote daily memos concerning world current events relevant to the Committee. This included the status of Brexit, safety concerns across Europe and the world, and research for upcoming Senate hearings and nominations. I was often asked to condense long pieces of legislation into concise one-page reports for distribution around the office and Corker employees in Tennessee. I also attended regular office meetings as much as possible and participated in team softball games against other congressional offices.

Another example of an exciting aspect of my internship was the opportunity to attend several meetings, ceremonies, and events with foreign leaders and experience first-hand the intricacies of foreign diplomacy. Two highlights include Prime Minister Modi of India’s reception on Capitol Hill and meeting the 14th Dalai Lama. A particularly transformative experience was His Holiness placing his hand on my shoulder and telling me that young people are the future.
I was lucky enough to continue to develop my ability to write and think critically, gain important insight into the political process, deepen my knowledge of government relations, and gain an immense appreciation for the history and importance of the Senate and the Foreign Relations Committee. Additionally, being in the heart of D.C. gave me the opportunity to network and develop significant contacts to reach out to when applying for my first job after graduation and beyond.

This internship is the perfect combination of my Politics major and International and Global Studies and History double minors and one I will always be thankful for.