

**Keyword: Major**

**Interviewee information:**

- Name/nickname: Sthefany
- School year: 2021
- Major: International Studies
- Hometown: Houston, TX
- Family's country of origin: El Salvador

**Transcript (copy segment transcript here):**

**[08:25-12:48]**

So what's your major? Why do you choose it? I know you talked a little about that but could you expand.

[00:08:35] So I major in international studies and I picked specifically the politics and diplomacy track. For me, I like I mentioned earlier, like I high school was dedicated, sort of like debate and like research and stuff like that. And during all of that, I had to read a lot of stuff about international politics and foreign policy and things like that. And I'm from El Salvador originally.

[00:09:01] Well let me say it right, I'm from El Salvador originally and I think growing up and hearing the stories I wanted to tell about, like the Civil War and like sort of U.S. policy and stuff like that, it being such an awful disaster, I felt like I wanted to do something that could not just like be a lifelong career or cared about, but also something my mom would be proud of. So I picked International Studies. And as I was going through international studies, though, I ended up picking up two minors and I picked up journalism and I picked up Arabic. I didn't think I pick up Arabic like it was an interesting language.

[00:09:43] I thought it'd be helpful, like a foot up, like politics. But for me, it was like I ended up finding a lot of parallels between my story back home in Central America and you know abroad. Like a lot of foreign policy disasters and a lot of mistakes that we made. And I wanted to sort of help rectify them the way that I could in whatever way you could. And I felt like International Studies like Arabic and journalism a sort of a perfect trifecta for what I wanted to do.

[00:10:12] So what's your region for International Studies Middle East? Yeah, it's Middle East studies.

[00:10:19] So why Arabic? Why? What similarities or what drew you to the Middle East, or to choose the Middle East?

[00:10:29] Yeah, definitely. Like like I was mentioning earlier. I think things that drew me to the Middle East is definitely the parallels I saw like within my own narrative at home and sort of the narratives I got to share with other people I knew like I remember like in middle school or elementary school was predominately like other Latinos and like predominantly like other like people of color, but not too many people who were like Arab speaking descent or culture. And then I got to high school and I got to interact with a lot of people. And I remember my best friend in high school. She was Palestinian. And, you know, we got to talking. And pretty soon I realized that the things that had hurt me growing up and sort of caused a lot of generational trauma had also caused a lot of generational trauma in her, too. And I think we sort of found a way to cope by sharing the stories. And I remember like a first time that her mom, her mom was like mostly Arabic speaking. And so I was like, OK, so this is not just beneficial to my career. This is not just a very critical language to learn. It's important because I care about the stories that you can learn through them a lot. And like the culture and plus, it's like a pretty place. You know, I went to Morocco. It was gorgeous.

[00:11:38] How was your experience there? How did you get there?  
In Morocco?

Yeah like did you do a study abroad through A&M? Or how was that?

[00:11:47] I did a study abroad through A&M to get to Morocco. And I sincerely like I love that country so much. Like it was so beautiful. And there were so many cool people there. Like, I like my family's indigenous on my mom's side so we're Nawat-Pipil in El Salvador, like we're definitely the minority.

[00:12:09] And I when I went to Morocco, like I think when my favorite things that I learned there was like about the Amazigh people. And the Amazigh people they're like an indigenous minority that are also in Morocco. And I remember like most of the time there, I ended up picking up like a research project project with my professor and sort of ended up looking more into the Amazigh culture and sort of like a story that had to be told there. And so I fell in love with the sights and definitely like a lot of the stories that were intersecting in Morocco.

[00:12:37] It's crazy to see the similarities so far away.  
Yeah, absolutely. All across the world, there's a pretty similar thing.

[00:12:42] And it's colonialism,  
exploitation  
and exploitation. Absolutely.