"Interruption!" said my late grandfather and political inspiration during the Indonesian President Suharto's dictatorial regime (1967-1998) in the people's consultative assembly, where interruptions were prohibited. His ability to voice what is right and fighting injustice despite going against the system made me eager to uphold what he instilled: Politics is sacred. To continue his legacy, I hope to establish a new positive political nuance by integrating political studies and ideologies from foreign countries with Indonesia’s.

I was privileged to interview Joko Widodo, Indonesia's current president, for an independent research project, where I learned the importance of an orderly system in a government. I extended my study to examine how his rival, Prabowo Subianto, joined his ministerial cabinet through a psychological lens. I unveiled that despite their differences in political ideology (individualistic) they shared a mutual interest in upholding Pancasila (collectivistic), Indonesia’s national philosophy; an ideal portrayal of a representative democracy. The study gained me recognition from executives of Indonesian think tanks and a seat in critical conversations.

I was also one of the editors and sole advisor for a member of the parliament’s book called 'Diplomasi parliamen dan Politik Luar Negeri R.' Again, we used psychological theories to inspect motives behind Indonesia's foreign policy; how democracy was first introduced and its progression. These experiences shifted my view of politics, discovering that politics is not just a subject within its realm but one that integrates others to magnify its own. This enhanced my political literacy and made me understand political matters in a pragmatic and calculative approach.

Exploring the US foreign policy made me understand that USA’s interest in the Israeli Palestinian conflict comes from their shared commitment of democracy and regional security, which ties back to the findings of my study that mutual belief of society surpasses individualistic values. I continued my investigation in the Oxford University-led international politics summer program. Here I discovered that the conflict is much more complex than the common media portrayal of it having solely a religious root; that there are other contributing factors, such as land territory.

I also participated in the London International Model United Nations (LIMUN) Conference, where I researched and discussed threats from cyberspace. This made me reminisce about my dear friend, Miguel Panduwinata, whose life was lost in the downing of flight MH17 in 2014. Through the book 'Bellingcat,' I learned how the global intelligence network uses open-source data to carry out international investigations. Having access to publicly available data allowed Bellingcat to investigate and reveal the truth after seven years. In my LIMUN experience, contrary to nationalizing cyberspace, I proposed a resolution to reinstitute peace, where cyberspace intelligence should be transparent, and information should be exchanged between countries.

During my gap year, I co-founded a thrift shop called Velvet Youth Club (VYC) and started a project on how to distribute food waste through an app. I learned how to collaborate and communicate with charitable organizations to support cancer survivors, animal shelters, and COVID-19 frontlines. Through these experiences, I have become a better communicator, collaborator and a confident person which are attributes I will take in student organizations I will partake in university.

Through the holistic insights, depth of knowledge, and research skills I will gain during my undergraduate study, I plan to continue my good work in preparation to become an advocate of change in restoring political sacredness and strengthening international relations by upholding moral value and reforming the systematic flaws in Indonesia’s system by adopting better and proven systems from other countries.