

Kerby Gilstrap, Arabic and International Affairs, Class of 2022

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Kerby Gilstrap is a senior at WKU, majoring in Arabic and International Affairs. Originally from Bowling Green, she first took Arabic when she arrived at WKU and the [Arabic major program](#), unique to the Hill, changed her career path and trajectory as she identified a newfound passion for the Arabic language and Middle Eastern Culture. She has been very involved in the Arabic program at WKU as well as its different activities during her time on the Hill and feels the program will give her many opportunities with her interest in the environment and international affairs.



Gilstrap has invested much time in finding ways to improve her Arabic skills while getting more involved. Currently, she is the team lead for the WKU [QatarDebate](#) Team which competes nationally and internationally with debates fully in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Moreover, she is the President of the [WKU Arabic Club](#), an extracurricular activity that hosts weekly events related to Arabic language, civilization, and culture. Last summer, she served as a teaching assistant in the Arabic course at WKU’s camp [VAMPY](#), for verbally and mathematically gifted students. Currently, she is also a semifinalist for the Fulbright program. With her academic involvement, Gilstrap has displayed a strong dedication to Arabic language and culture.

She explained to WKU Modern Languages her plans for the future. “I want to get my masters eventually, but I plan to work in grassroots environmental movements in the Arab world.” Gilstrap has a passion for environmental sustainability and will find a way to bridge her two interests in a future career and intends on using her Arabic skills to work on environmental problems in the Middle East. However, she also acknowledges the potential of doing freelance translation and travel as a potential future.

Gilstrap also told Modern Languages her advice for students interested in specializing in language. She says, “Do it! Language courses are the easiest to make friends in because you practice speaking so much. You can increase your network and take on many opportunities unavailable to other students.” Gilstrap recommends that any student interested in exploring another language or culture to seize the opportunity to do so.

