**Liam Deering**

**UNC Alumni 2017**

Taking Turkish classes at UNC was one of the best decisions that I made during my academic career. I developed a more unique language skillset, was exposed to a vast, new culture, made lifelong friends, and got to travel to one of my favourite places in the world - Istanbul. I will never forget my time studying Turkish in Chapel Hill, undoubtedly one of the best classes that I have ever taken as either an undergraduate or a graduate student. Our Turkish class created an environment that made everyone want to participate and a class that I never wanted to miss. Hard work in Turkish class was very rewarding as the benefits in the process of learning the language were very clear. My time studying Turkish in Chapel Hill led me to apply for a US Department of Education summer FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies) grant, a scholarship that would allow me to spend my summer in Istanbul, continuing my study of the language and culture. After successfully acquiring the scholarship, with the help of Didem *Hocam*, I found myself in Turkey, taking intensive language classes and exploring the massive and diverse city of Istanbul. I look back on my time in Istanbul as one of the best experiences of my life, I was and still am very thankful to have had this opportunity. I greatly advanced my Turkish language abilities, enjoyed some of the best food in the world, made excellent friends, and had an absolute blast while doing so. Whilst the political and military situation in Turkey cut my time in the city short in an unfortunate sequence of events, I look back on this time, able to proudly say that if I had the chance to do it all over again, I wouldn’t change a thing. I am very glad that I chose to pursue Turkish Studies at UNC during my time in the Transatlantic Masters (TAM) Program and am confident that my experiences in both Chapel Hill and Istanbul will prove to be very beneficial throughout my life.

