I was surprised by the openness I found in my professors,” Kristen says. “Right off the bat, they were willing to spend so much time with me. I quickly realized that you definitely don’t feel like a number here.”

As a sophomore, Kristen helped establish the College’s chapter of Americans for Informed Democracy. Then she heard David Batstone – an expert on the contemporary slave trade – speak on campus. That experience led her to a summer internship with Not For Sale, an advocacy group. Afterward, she organized a campus workshop on human trafficking, and then began working with faculty advisors on a research project entitled the “Modern Slave Trade in South Carolina.”

Kristen also opted to spend a semester at sea. “Our ship transited the Red Sea,” she recalls. “On board, I took a course on international terrorism, and when I got back to Charleston, I ended up doing an independent study on that topic. Ultimately, I wrote three papers comparing and contrasting different ideas, including religion and terrorism.” To put that subject matter into context, she read several novels for a special topics course – “From Utopia to Dystopia.”

Kristen applied for a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to study politics in South Africa after graduation. She now feels that majoring in political science was pivotal because it inspired her in ways she could never have anticipated. “It can open doors to places you never dreamed of going. I learned that this major can be the key to a whole new world.”