Scholarship Proposal:

I am incredibly passionate about architecture and cooking. Every Friday I cook for 150 people as the head chef in my cooperative house. Much like architecture, you utilize the materials you have and do your best to fit the constraints of the meal. We try to establish a language and relationship between the dishes while cooking meat, vegetarian, and vegan options. This trip would serve as the academic analysis of both my interests at the moment.

My heritage is very important to me. My mother is Japanese, but my father is Texan. Although my parents come from polar cultures, they accept one another. When my dad makes his famous rib-eye steak, my mother uses a mix of soy sauce and wasabi for seasoning. My dad would watch old samurai movies with me, making fun of their serious tones and swinging imaginary swords to battle with me. He taught me his Texan culture, too. In fact, I might have been the first Asian boy to speak in an outrageous Texan accent. Growing up, I thought it was natural to learn two languages and be a part of two cultures. This understanding and acceptance of two different cultures makes me a good candidate to travel abroad and analyze the differences between American and Indian culture.

Growing up around different cultures has made me very curious about traveling around the world. From a young age I have been traveling to Japan almost every year. My mother taught me Japanese and I have loved the culture. It extends into all my interests including architecture and food.

While I believe that consistent hard work is necessary to produce good design, staying in studio all the time is not conducive to new fresh ideas. By placing yourself in a completely different environment, you can explore new frontiers in food, architecture, entertainment, lifestyle, etc. I’ve been to South America and Japan and whenever I go I fill up sketch books up with tons of drawings. But I want to specialize focus on one architectural feature so I can gain specific knowledge on an understudied field. I want to continue traveling all across the world and explore architecture of other cultures.

The first week of 100A shocked me into disbelief. I underestimated architecture as a major and as a profession. The ability to design isn’t reliant on innate skill, but hard work and complete dedication. After working at a Japanese architecture firm for three months over the summer, I thought I had experienced the most intensive part of architecture, but I was only making models and not participating in the design process. Architecture isn’t frustrating because of the time commitment, but finding solutions to completely fulfill project parameters is exceedingly difficult. Although I suffered through a culture shock for the first couple of weeks in Architecture 100A, I know now that I will continue pursuing my dream to work in Japan as an architect.
Over the past five years, the bay area has experienced a boom in the food truck industry. While some may not consider these food trucks to be architecture because of their mobility, I would argue differently. I believe food trucks are non-stationary micro structures that share traits with buildings. The concept of the food truck was born out of the idea of the food cart, which was operated by and meant to serve working class people. However, while the food cart was created out of necessity, the food truck was highly designed and meant to cater to a “hip,” wealthier population. Because food carts are much more prevalent in India than in the United States, I chose India as my research destination. The aim of my investigation is to compare and contrast the Indian food cart to the American food truck and research how each affects its urban setting.

The food trucks in the U.S. serve as a means for people to get food quickly because they specialize in a limited variety of food. They provide an open air space where there isn’t a stigma associated with ordering or eating alone, making it a more socially conducive place to meet people. Most of the time people eat and talk around the truck because the ambiance is inviting and friendly. Because they cultivate an environment conducive to social interaction, I consider food trucks to be architectural space.

As pieces of architecture, food trucks can radically influence circulation in a public space. As I have studied at Berkeley this year, I have been a consistent visitor to the food trucks on Bancroft. It seemed fascinating to me that from 8 to 5, a mobile food truck could increase the circulation and positively transform an underutilized public space. Also, the mobility of the food trucks creates a control in research that allows us to observe the exact differences between public space with and without it. Food trucks create convenience for Berkeley students and limit the need to circulate to surrounding restaurant architecture. I plan to research if food carts in India can invigorate public spaces and affect circulation to other architecture in the same way as they do in America.

Within the spectrum of food trucks and carts in the U.S., there is a great divide between the gourmet and the blue collar. Food trucks have been around a long time and frequently visit construction sites or offices to distribute food quickly to workers on their lunch break. In America, gourmet food trucks are placed near wealthier and more fashionable neighborhoods while food carts reside near construction sites and parking lots. I would like to investigate if India has a similar hierarchy within the mobile food industry and whether the placement of a food cart can tell us more about the surrounding built environment.

The food of a country is most always defined by the most famous and luxurious foods not the daily staples. So often in architecture, we focus on the monumental while there is not enough emphasis on the vernacular and seemingly insignificant buildings. I think there is great value in studying an unacknowledged type of architecture that would not be possible without traveling abroad.

In my time in India, I plan to record and analyze the differences in circulation around the same public spaces with and without food trucks. Through the lens of the food cart as a form of architecture, I will also diagram and analyze the placement of food carts in relation to the socio-
economic status of the surrounding built environment. I have just contacted the National Association of Street Vendors in India in order to get some guidance from their intern student to tour and research around Mumbai. The pursuit of this research would only be possible outside the limited settings of the classroom, and by comparing the Indian food cart and American food truck I hope to gain a better understanding in how a mobile architecture can affect the circulation of public spaces and determine the socio-economic status of the surrounding built environment.
**Travel Itinerary:** (14 days in total)
Departure date not confirmed

Fly into Mumbai (bollywood)
3 days
Train to Rahajstan (desert)
2 days there (Udaipur)
Train to Delhi (international city)
3 days there
(Bus to Agra) (Taj Mahal)
Train to Varanasi (Hindu Mecca)
2 days
Train to Calcutta (Communist state)
2 days
Train to Chennai (Main southern city)
2 days
Train to Goa (Portuguese settlement)
Fly back to California