I decided to go to the College of Charleston because of the liberal arts education. I knew that studying only one subject for four years would not bring me the joy or the knowledge that I wanted to get from my college experience. In my first semester, I decided that I wanted to go into law or politics and I had to find majors that were going to give me fundamental knowledge about laws, justice, philosophy, inequity, and a lot more. I decided on WGS when I learned that I could take all types of classes in different areas of study with a focus on gender and/or sexuality. This allowed me to study both historical and current issues like women in war, gender in politics, and trans representation in media. My classes challenged me and encouraged me often and I am lucky to have taken all of them. Out of all these wonderful experiences, the most impactful was getting to write my Bachelor’s Essay in the WGS major. With the help of Dr. Claire Curtis (Political Science) and Dr. Kris De Welde (WGS), I later presented my research about the relationship between women’s education, confidence, and politics. The process of planning, writing, and presenting my research gave me ownership over my studies and helped grow my own confidence. It has informed my practices as a student and a teacher.

What have you been doing since graduation? How did your major in WGS prepare you for your current position?

I am currently a 4th grade reading teacher in Miami-Dade County, Florida through Teach for America, a program that places people in classrooms that receive a disproportionate amount of resources. I am white and almost every student I teach is part of BIPOC communities. I have to work each day to be an antiracist educator and to ensure that I am doing all that I can for my students to get the education they deserve. This involves my challenging myself daily. The major taught me how to consider new perspectives, how to replace what my earlier education has taught me, and how to question my own biased thinking. I could not be where I am today without it. Thanks to my studies in WGS, I am now able to discuss racism, sexism, transphobia, and other important topics with my students in the classroom.

What are your aspirations for the near future?

In the future, I would like to continue towards a career in policy or law so that I can help dismantle and change the racist and unjust society we live in.

"THANKS TO MY STUDIES IN WGS, I AM NOW ABLE TO DISCUSS RACISM, SEXISM, TRANSPHOBIA, AND OTHER IMPORTANT TOPICS WITH MY STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM."

- SAM MCCARTHY ('20)