I used the Arthur Felix Broomfield prize over the Easter Vacation of my 2nd year to travel to Singapore and conduct some preliminary research on my thesis on class cleavage structures in Singapore and the impact on the party system. I believed such a thesis would be significant because it challenges the extent to which the western models of electoral politics apply in other contexts. Moreover, by determining the bases of support for the dominant political party in Singapore, this research may shed some light into how Singapore has remained a one-party state.

The thesis aimed to combine elements from both disciplines of my History and Politics Course. Using quantitative methodology, I wanted to examine the extent to which Singaporeans hold class identities and whether these identities translated to voter support or partisanship for the different parties in Singapore. Using a historical approach, I wanted to further investigate how these class identities were (or were not) developed over time. Whilst I have yet to come up with full conclusions from my research, my experiences over Easter vacation has gone someway to helping me make progress on my thesis.

With regard to the quantitative research, travelling back to Singapore has enabled me to do some preliminary data analysis as part of a month-long internship in the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). The IPS is the main politics research institution in Singapore and it regularly conducts both in-house and global surveys. Therefore, I was able to gain access to normally confidential raw data, such as the IPS Post-Election Survey and the Asian Barometer Survey. The IPS is also usually the first institution to analyse the data to identify key trends. Many of these researchers were my colleagues and they mentored me on how I could use the data for my thesis. I was therefore able to hone my skills in quantitative research as well. Throughout this internship, I was supervised by Dr. Gillian Koh, the deputy director of IPS.

Whilst I have not fully analysed all the data, my preliminary conclusions are that Singaporeans tend to display weak class identity and class identity is a weak predictor of voting behaviour and partisanship. This is in contrast to most Western countries where class cleavages have significant impact on voting behaviour. I am exploring several possible directions to extend the research. One possibility is to examine whether class has been depoliticized because the differences between party policy have reduced as they have converged to the centre on socio-economic issues. Another possibility is to examine what, if not class, determines the bases of support for the political parties in Singapore.

On top of conducting preliminary research for my thesis, the internship was also fruitful for my future professional career as I was given the opportunity to write two articles that were published online. One used World Values Survey data to determine attitudes towards immigration in Singapore (http://www.ipscommons.sg/drop-the-anti-immigrant-rhetoric-focus-on-integration/). The other was published on Singapore’s national newspaper and was an opinion piece about Singapore’s approach to terrorism (http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/how-robust-is-singapores-recipe-for-security-in-an-age-of-terror/).
With regard to the historical research, returning to Singapore has also been immensely useful. I was given access to books published by Singaporean academics which would normally not be found in the UK. Such books include *Political Legitimacy and Housing* by Beng-Huat Chua, which explains how housing policy in the 1960s led to the depoliticisation of class; *Singapore's Economic Development: Retrospection and Reflection* edited by Linda Lim, which provides insight into Singapore's labour policy from the 1970s to present day and its impact on class; and *Change in Voting* by Terence Lee and Kevin Tan, which sheds light into voting behaviour in the most recent general elections (2015). These books (and more) help to provide a historical narrative to the issue class and will be a core feature of my literature review in my thesis.

Returning to Singapore has also enabled me to speak to academics who have a better understanding of Singapore’s political history. One of these academics was the writer of one of the afore-mentioned books – Beng-Huat Chua. He has suggested that I could approach Singapore’s political history from a Gramscian framework of cultural hegemony. I would need to do further research before I can decide whether I should take him up on his advice. Moreover, returning to Singapore has also given me access to archival records. I have yet to fully peruse these records, but they might be useful in providing primary sources to explain the weakness of class identity.

As can be observed, my thesis is still very much in the preliminary stages and it will be focused and refined as the year goes on. However, traveling back to Singapore has been very useful in providing access to data and primary sources for me to do further work in the future. It has also exposed me to different ideas on how I could approach my thesis topic. The progress on my thesis would therefore not be possible without the Arthur Felix Broomfield prize and I would like to put on record my sincerest gratitude to the donors.