

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, BA

International Studies (IS) is an interdisciplinary major with a broad background in international and transnational political, social, economic, commercial, and environmental affairs, together with a comparative study of politics, economics, security, and culture. The goal is to provide students with the necessary tools to understand global processes in their totality and how they are situated and lived in specific regions.

The major provides an integrated program of courses that lays the foundation for professional training in a wide variety of areas. Such a foundation can be invaluable in securing a place in competitive graduate or professional schools, which, in turn, prepare students for government service, or for other careers with an international focus, including those in multinational corporations, international finance, non-governmental organizations, and institutions of teaching and research.

The International Studies major complements numerous majors across campus. Many students choose to double major or enhance their studies with one or more certificates, such as the Global Health certificate or those offered by the area studies centers.

This major is interdisciplinary, offering a wealth of options. Careful planning and consultation with the International Studies advisor is especially important.

OPTIONS IN THE MAJOR:

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIANISM

This named option covers the range of laws, norms, and organizations that address the protection of vulnerable populations and ordinary citizens. This named option covers human rights, as they are codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; hence it covers the civil and political rights, from speech, belief, association, and discrimination, to social, economic, and cultural rights, such as the right to education, health, and water, among others. Human Rights and Humanitarianism also encompasses the organizations and institutions that work to protect and advocate for these rights, inclusive of courses on international law, nonprofit management, and non-state actors in global politics as well as those on specialized multilateral organizations that deal with human rights, such as regional organizations and specialized agencies at the United Nations. The named option similarly addresses social movements for change. It addresses the ways in which civilians are protected when thrust into conditions of hardship, including the laws of war, regimes on migration and forced migration, and efforts to address global health disparities.

GLOBAL SECURITY

This named option covers traditional and non-traditional forms of insecurity, disorder, and violent conflict as well as efforts to resolve and manage conflict. The thematic categories include forms of war, including interstate and civil war, as well as forms of political violence against civilians, such as terrorism, genocide, riots, and massacres. Global Security also covers non-traditional forms of insecurity, such as climate change, biothreats, pandemics and other infectious diseases, cyberattacks and cybersecurity, and food security. This named option also encompasses a range of ways to manage these forms of insecurity, including peacekeeping, other multilateral efforts to mediate conflict, counterinsurgency, and post-conflict peacebuilding.

POLITICS AND POLICY IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

This named option offers a multidisciplinary survey of international economic and political institutions and transactions, as well as the policy issues pertaining to international commerce and trade, international finance and monetary relations, international macroeconomic policy coordination, U.S. trade imbalances, aid and development, and related environmental and natural resource problems.

CULTURE IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

In this named option, students investigate crosscultural interactions at different levels: local, national, and transnational. Students engage in such issues as cosmopolitanism; international and global flows of images, ideas, and people; questions of identity; changing assumptions of what it means to be indigenous and foreign; globalization and technology; and the impact of globalization on cultures.

STUDY ABROAD

International Studies and studying abroad are a natural combination. While study abroad is not a requirement for the major, all International Studies students are strongly encouraged to pursue a significant international experience during the course of the undergraduate career. Whether through a study abroad program, an internship, or service learning, the experience of studying or working in a foreign culture is invaluable. Many courses taken abroad will count toward the International Studies major. See the International Studies advisor for specific guidelines. More information about study abroad and internships is available through International Academic Programs (<http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/>).