International Studies

Program Mission Statement

The mission of the International Studies Program is to endow students with knowledge of interdisciplinary international studies and with the skills necessary to become effective global citizens. The Departments of Art and Design; Economics and Geography; English; History; Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; Philosophy; Political Science and Public Administration; and Sociology and Anthropology cooperatively provide students with an interdisciplinary curriculum that captures the wide-ranging historical, political, geographical, economic, social, and cultural forces at play in an increasingly interdependent world. A required study abroad component ensures that students experience the world they study and cultures other than their own. Through classroom experiences as well as extracurricular opportunities, students benefit from the varied disciplinary research activities of faculty teaching within the Program. The Program's interdisciplinary curriculum and extracurricular activities contribute to the development of knowledge and skills students can employ in internships, volunteer activities, graduate school, careers and everyday life -- at home and abroad.

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

Content/Discipline-Specific Knowledge/Skills

- Demonstrate structural knowledge of the international system, including: roles and structures of state, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental actors; the system's historical evolution; and prevailing political, economic, social, and geographic debates about the system.
- Demonstrate awareness of the variety of political, economic, geographic, cultural, and environmental orientations visible in the international system, such as nationalism, capitalism, globalization, etc.

Communication Skills

- Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate program-specific knowledge, both verbally and in writing. This includes the ability to effectively argue and defend a position.
- Demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language at the intermediate level.

Critical Thinking Skills

- Employ the discipline's theories, approaches, and/or methods in order to examine and understand past, present, and/or possible future international interactions.
- Analyze the effects of conflict and cooperation in historical, political, geographical, economic, social, and cultural international interactions.

Other Skills (Opt.)

- Apply classroom concepts to the "real world" through participation in a required study abroad program.

Assessment Approaches

The International Studies Program assessment is carried out in INR 4930 Capstone Seminar: International Studies (offered only in Fall semesters) and consists of a comprehensive questionnaire completed by students and direct assessment of a writing assignment. The questionnaire was divided into sections based upon the defined Academic Learning Outcomes for the major. Each section includes a question asking the students to mark their opinion of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree as to whether they felt they had achieved the listed outcome. Students are also given the opportunity to answer an open-ended question explaining "why or why not" to go along with their opinion. For most outcomes, the questions that followed were content questions, submitted by the core course faculty, directly measuring student knowledge and retention of key concepts and course material, taught in core courses, related to each Academic Learning Outcome.

The results are reviewed by International Studies Advisory Committee, a group of faculty representing the disciplines contributing to the major, particularly the disciplines within the core, required courses.