

International Studies

Interdisciplinary

Requirements

The International Studies Program enables students to analyze an increasingly global society using the foundations of the liberal arts. International studies majors concentrate in one of three thematic tracks — development, environment, or politics & society — taking a focused set of courses from several disciplines to develop their understanding of that topic. Majors apply that knowledge to the sustained study of a particular region of the world, where they spend at least a semester abroad studying, living in, and experiencing a foreign culture.

International studies majors must have an adventurous spirit and a high level of personal motivation. They must learn foreign languages, study in distant countries and think rigorously across disciplinary boundaries. The program especially encourages students to study the problems and challenges of areas other than Western Europe and North America.

Beginning Studies

International studies majors select an area of geographic concentration and follow a series of courses in one of the three thematic tracks. We strongly recommend that first-year students take courses in a language appropriate for the geographic area in which they plan to concentrate (Spanish for Latin America, Chinese for East Asia, and so forth). This suggestion is by far the most important one we can make, for success in off-campus study in the area concentration depends heavily on language skills. Second, you should look carefully at the introductory courses listed for each of the three thematic tracks. Consider taking one or more of the courses that can serve in more than one thematic track — e.g., ANTH 113, ECON 101, PSCI 260, SOCY 105 or HIST 100. Students should consult the director of the program for additional advice.

The Curriculum

Regardless of which of the three thematic tracks a student follows, there are seven elements in the international studies curriculum: (1) INST 201, the required sophomore course, (2) core track courses, (3) area concentration, (4) foreign language, (5) off-campus study, (6) INST 401, the required senior seminar, and (7) a senior exercise. There is also the possibility of engaging in an honors project during senior year.

Sophomore course

The Expansion of International Society (INST 201) explores the historical origins, causes and implications of today's globalized world.

Core track courses

Each of the three thematic tracks has its own assortment of introductory, upper-level and research methods courses, which are listed along with the description of each track below.

Area concentration

Students must take at least four courses on a geographic region outside the United States such as sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Eastern Europe or Western Europe, or else on a more culturally-defined region such as the Islamic world, the Atlantic world or a diaspora community. At least two of the area courses must be historical in scope, including a course on the modern history of the region, and at least two of the area courses must be taken at Kenyon. Although one region serves as the primary focus, students are encouraged to include at least one course that explores that region's historical and cultural connections with other regions. Some examples of trans-regional courses are: ASIA 201, CWL 220, FREN 340, HIST 166, HIST 242, HIST 258, HIST 261, HIST 345, HIST 373, HIST 454, RLST 235, RLST 240, RLST 447, SPAN 330 and SPAN 365.

Foreign language

Majors must complete at least two years of college-level instruction in one foreign language or demonstrate such proficiency through a placement exam. If studying abroad in a place where the local language is one not offered at Kenyon, then the student is allowed to fulfill the second year of the requirement by studying that language while abroad or through summer programs. All students are required to study a local language during their study-abroad experience.

Off-campus study

All international studies majors must study abroad for at least a semester and are encouraged to do so for an entire year. Students are expected to study abroad in a program relevant to their thematic track, area concentration and foreign language training, and in an area where the majority of the people speak a language different from the student's own primary language. Keep in mind that off-campus study at Kenyon is competitive and writing a strong application is critical. In order to study abroad, a student must receive approval from the College and have achieved a GPA of at least 2.75.

Senior seminar

Contemporary Global Issues (INST 401) is a comparative course that brings all international studies majors together during the fall of their senior year to look at significant global problems from the various perspectives they bring based on their specializations.

Senior exercise

The senior exercise provides an opportunity for majors to undertake a substantial, independent research project that combines and reflects their thematic training and regional knowledge. It usually builds on

their experience and research abroad and then examines it from a broadly intellectual and comparative perspective. Seniors are encouraged to consult with any faculty whose expertise has bearing on their investigation. Projects usually take the form of a research paper of about twenty to thirty pages in length. They are due in mid-February. Additional information about the senior exercise is available through the department website.

Honors

The international studies honors program offers qualified students the opportunity to work intensively on a research project during their entire senior year under the close guidance of one or two faculty members. Students who think they might want to pursue this option should consult early with the director, preferably before going off-campus in their junior year, as the study abroad experience will usually shape or inform the honors project. Honors students produce a written work of an appropriate length in their thematic track (usually a minimum of 80 pages), and an outside examiner reads and assesses each student's work at the end of the spring semester.

Kenyon requires a minimum GPA of 3.50 to be eligible for honors, and honors candidates enroll in INST 497Y and INST 498Y for 0.5 units each semester. For more detailed information about honors in international studies, see the INST Honors Guidelines (PDF).

Development Track

This track appeals to those drawn to the study of Asia, Africa and Latin America because of an interest in the prospects for socioeconomic change in those regions. Development is studied as an inherently interdisciplinary and global issue, incorporating the perspectives of economics and other social sciences while exploring the roles of trade, aid, governments and international institutions in shaping relations between wealthier and poorer countries. Students also focus on a particular geographic region in the "developing world," studying the culture and society of the area in which they undertake off-campus study in order to better understand the development challenges faced by people in that area. Those regions include sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Islamic world.

Development Track Core Courses

Introductory (3 courses): ECON 101, ECON 102 and either ANTH 113, SOCY101, SOCY 103, SOCY 105, SOCY 107 or SOCY 108.

Upper-level (4 courses): ECON 331, ECON 332 or ECON 339; two courses that situate the challenges of development in a broader context, from two different departments, such as ANTH 357, ANTH 358, PSCI 342, PSCI 361, PSCI 366, PSCI 470, RLST 380, SOCY 223, SOCY 233 and SOCY 251; and one course on global cultural aspects of development, such as AMST 331, ANTH 253, ANTH 310D, CWL 333, ENGL 265, ENGL 363, SOCY 249 or SOCY 466.

Research Methods (1 social science methods course): ANTH 464, ECON 205, HIST 387, PSCI 280, PSCI 397, SOCY 271 or SOCY 374.

Environment Track

The study of issues related to the environment, ecosystems and natural resources requires an interdisciplinary and international approach. Many environmental issues are global in scope or are best studied comparatively between different regions, and other issues central to international studies have fundamental implications for the environment. Students in this track combine scientific training with international studies in order to examine complex environmental issues. They are expected to take advantage of a growing number of off-campus study programs that deal primarily with environmental questions, and students majoring in this track must also fulfill the requirements for the Concentration in Environmental Studies.

Environment Track Core Courses

Introductory (5 courses): ENV5 112; BIOL 106 or BIOL 115; CHEM 108 or CHEM 110; ECON 101; and one introductory course on the global social context of environmental issues, such as ANTH 113, PSCI 260, SOCY 101, SOCY 103, SOCY 105 SOCY 107 or SOCY 108.

Upper-level (4 courses): ENV5 461; and three courses on the challenges of managing the environment, such as ANTH 320, ECON 336, ECON 342, ECON 347, ENV5 253, PSCI 361, PSCI 363, PSCI 480, RLST 481, SOCY 233 and SOCY 242.

Research Methods (1 course, plus lab for science courses): ANTH 464, BIOL 228 & 229, BIOL 352 & 353, CHEM 231 & 233, ECON 205, ENV5 261, PSCI 280, or PSCI 397.

Politics and Society Track

This track appeals to students who are interested in the impact of recent globalization on how societies are governed in different areas of the world and how international institutions have been engaged in world affairs. Students explore ways that political science, sociology and other social sciences have described global phenomena such as human rights, migration, democracy, and terrorism, studying the efforts of states and non-state actors to manage people, forces and ideologies that transcend national borders. As with the other tracks, students focus on a particular geographic region, but their off-campus study program and area courses should include study of issues and interactions that extend beyond their primary regional focus.

Politics and Society Track Core Courses

Introductory (4 courses): ECON 101; either PSCI 240 or PSCI 260; an introductory sociology course such as SOCY 101, SOCY 103, SOCY 105, SOCY 107 or SOCY 108; and a course on global cultural and historical interactions such as ENGL 265, HIST 100, HIST 226, HIST 275, MLL 260, RLST 101, SOCY 221 or SOCY 249.

Upper-level (3 of the following from two departments): ECON 335, ECON 338, ECON 339, PSCI 340, PSCI 351, PSCI 355, PSCI 361, PSCI 446, PSCI 460, PSCI 465, PSCI 471, SOCY 235, SOCY 237, SOCY 251, SOCY 425, SOCY 466 or WGS 242.

Research Methods (1 social science methods course): ECON 205, HIST 387, PSCI 280, PSCI 397, SOCY 271 or SOCY 374.