

International Studies

Interdisciplinary

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 and 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, prospective majors 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

Please note that the International Studies curriculum was revised in 2020. Students in the class of 2022 should follow the old curriculum. Students in all other classes should follow the new curriculum. For further information about the old curriculum, see the description in the [2020-21 course catalog](#).

Regardless of which of the three thematic tracks a student follows, there are seven elements in the international studies curriculum:

1. Sophomore course

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

2. 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.

3. 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: AMES 201, FREN 340, HIST 166, HIST 242, HIST 258, HIST 261, HIST 345, HIST 373, HIST 454, RLST 135, RLST 140, SPAN 330 or SPAN 365.

A Required Major Areas [form](#) must be completed and submitted to the Registrar's Office, indicating the courses for your area concentration.

4. 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 studying off-campus. All students are required to study a local language during their off-campus study experience.

5. 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. A maximum of two courses from each semester of off-campus study can be used to fulfill requirements in the international studies major. Students should keep in mind that off-campus study at Kenyon is competitive and writing a strong application is critical. In order to study off-campus, a student must receive approval from the College and have achieved a GPA of at least 2.50.

6. Senior Seminar

INST 401 Contemporary Global Issues, 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.

7. Senior Capstone

The Senior Capstone 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 investigations. Projects 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 Capstone is available through the department website. Students can keep track of their progress with a checklist for majors.

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 (minimum of 80 pages and often more), and an outside examiner reads and assesses each student's work at the end of the spring semester.

Kenyon requires a minimum GPA of 3.33 to be eligible for honors, and honors candidates enroll in INST 497Y and INST 498Y each semester.

For more detailed information about honors in international studies, see the [INST Honors Guidelines](#).

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 (three courses): 1) ECON 101; 2) ECON 102; and 3) either ANTH 113, SOCY 101, SOCY 103, SOCY 105, SOCY 107 or SOCY 108.

Upper-level (four courses): ECON 331, ECON 338, ECON 339 or PSCI 342; two courses that situate the challenges of development in a broader context, from two different departments, such as ANTH 200, ANTH 320, ANTH 358, ECON 335, ECON 373, ECON 374, HIST 226, HIST 256, HIST 311, HIST 342, PSCI 361, PSCI 362, PSCI 366, PSCI 470, PSCI 476, SOCY 223, SOCY 233, SOCY 237, SOCY 243 and SOCY 251; and one course on global cultural aspects of development, such as AMST 331, ANTH 253, ANTH 310D, ENGL 265, ENGL 266, ENGL 363, ENGL 367, SOCY 249, SOCY 432 or SOCY 466.

Research Methods (one social science methods course): ANTH 464, ECON 205, HIST 387, PSCI 280, PSCI 397, SOCY 271, SOCY 373 or SOCY 374.

Other courses, particularly special topic courses not offered regularly, may be acceptable substitutes for area concentration courses or, occasionally, introductory, upper-level, research methods courses. If you have a questions about a particular course, contact the program director.

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 (five courses, one from each of the following five groups): 1) ENVS 112; 2) BIOL 106 or BIOL 115; 3) CHEM 108, CHEM 110 or ENVS 104; 4) ECON 101; and 5) 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 (three courses): one, or preferably both, of the following foundational courses: ECON 336 and PSCI 363; and at least one of the following courses on the challenges of managing the environment, ANTH 200, ANTH 320, BIOL 328, BIOL 333, ECON 342, ECON 347, ENVS 231, ENVS 240, ENVS 253, ENVS 341, PSCI 361, PSCI 364, PSCI 480, RLST 350, SOCY 233, SOCY 238, SOCY 242 and SOCY 432.

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

Senior Seminar in Environmental Studies (one course): ENVS 461

Other courses, particularly special topic courses not offered regularly, may be acceptable substitutes for area concentration courses or, occasionally, introductory, upper-level, research methods courses. If you have a questions about a particular course, contact the program director.

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 (four courses, one each from four of the five following groups): 1) ANTH 113; 2) ECON 101; 3) either PSCI 240 or PSCI 260; 4) an introductory sociology course such as SOCY 101, SOCY 103, SOCY 105, SOCY 107 or SOCY 108; and 5) a course on global cultural and historical interactions such as ENGL 265, HIST 100, HIST 226, HIST 256, HIST 275, MLL 251, RLST 101, SOCY 221 or SOCY 249.

Upper-level (three courses from two departments): ANTH 310D, ANTH 312D, ANTH 460, ECON 335, ECON 338, ECON 339, HIST 311, HIST 322, HIST 342, HIST 345, HIST 374, HIST 454, HIST 458, PSCI 340, PSCI 351, PSCI 355, PSCI 361, PSCI 366, PSCI 374, PSCI 446, PSCI 447, PSCI 449, PSCI 450, PSCI 465, PSCI 470, PSCI 471, PSCI 476, RLST 135, RLST 140, RLST 217, RLST 335, SOCY 235, SOCY 237, SOCY 251, SOCY 432, SOCY 466 or WGS 242.

Research Methods (one methods course): ANTH 464, ECON 205, HIST 387, PSCI 280, RLST 390, SOCY 271, SOCY 373 or SOCY 374.

Other courses, particularly special topic courses not offered regularly, may be acceptable substitutes for area concentration courses or, occasionally, introductory, upper-level, research methods courses. If you have a questions about a particular course, contact the program director.

Courses in International Studies

The Expansion of International Society

INST 201 CREDITS: 0.5

This course is designed for sophomores who plan to major in international studies. It explores the evolution of modern international society by examining the roles of industrialization, capitalism, nationalism, individualism and other elements of modernity in propelling and directing the flow of wealth, people and ideas between different regions of the world. In addition to studying general political and economic changes, the course considers various local and personal perspectives, giving life to otherwise abstract forces and complicating attempts to construct a single overarching narrative of "modernization," "Westernization" or "development." Among the issues to be examined are the causes and effects of international economic disparities, migration, cultural tensions, and stresses on the environment. In surveying major viewpoints and illustrative cases within these themes, the course is meant to serve as an introduction to the international studies major, utilizing a variety of academic disciplines and providing a foundation for further study of relations between different nations and peoples of the world. As part of the course, students will complete a research paper related to the geographic area where they plan to go for their off-campus experience. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission of instructor. Offered every year.

Senior Seminar: Contemporary Global Issues

INST 401 CREDITS: 0.5

This seminar will examine some of the problems inherent in cross-cultural comparison and will explore the ways in which a variety of disciplines grapple with these difficulties by investigating contemporary themes in international affairs. These themes will include some or all of the following: (1) ethnic conflict; (2) comparative perspectives on development; (3) religion and socioeconomic development; (4) contemporary environmental problems; (5) the ethics of armed intervention; (6) the emergence of a world popular culture and its consequences for national cultures; (7) the challenges of democratization and (8) perceptions of the United States, Americans and U.S. foreign policy abroad. Open only to international studies majors with senior standing. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Offered every year.

Individual Study

INST 493 CREDITS: 0.25 - 0.5

Individual study is available to highly qualified juniors and seniors who would like to pursue a course of reading or complete a focused research project on a topic not regularly offered in the international studies curriculum. This option is available only in exceptional circumstances and must focus on topics specific to international studies, rather than ones more suited to another

department. All proposals must be approved by the International Studies Program director. To be considered for an individual study (IS) project, the candidate must prepare a proposal in consultation with a member of the international studies faculty who has suitable expertise and is willing to work with the student over the course of a semester. Because students must enroll for individual studies by the seventh day of classes in a semester, candidates should begin outlining their planned course of study with the supervising faculty member and the program director the semester before they hope to undertake the project. In all cases, proposals must be submitted by the fourth day of classes in the semester when the IS will take place. The (two-to-three page) proposal for individual study should include a statement of the questions to be explored, a preliminary bibliography, schedules for meeting with the supervising faculty member and for the completion of work, and a description of grading criteria. The student also should briefly describe prior coursework that particularly qualifies her or him to pursue the project independently. The program director will, in conjunction with the supervising faculty member, review the proposal, and if it is approved the student will then be allowed to pursue an individual study.

For all international studies IS projects, certain conditions will apply. The student will be required to meet regularly with the instructor for an average of at least one hour per week. The work involved will be substantial: for a 0.5 IS, the amount of graded work should approximate that required in a full credit 300- or 400-level course in the social sciences, humanities or sciences, while for a 0.25 IS, reading and writing requirements will be approximately half of that amount. Individual projects will vary, but students pursuing an IS in international studies should plan to read approximately 200 pages a week and to write at least 25 pages over the course of the semester. Because students must enroll for individual studies by the end of the seventh class day of each semester, they should begin discussion of the proposed individual study preferably the semester before, so that there is time to devise the proposal and seek departmental approval before the registrar's deadline. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.

Senior Honors

INST 497Y CREDITS: 0.5

The Honors Program is designed to recognize and encourage exceptional scholarship and to allow able students to do more independent work than is otherwise feasible. The senior honors candidate works with members of the international studies faculty to prepare an extended essay on a topic of mutual interest, which is defended before an outside examiner in May. For more detailed information about honors in international studies, see the department chair. Students standing for honors must also take the senior seminar. Students enrolled in this course will be automatically added to INST 498Y for the spring semester. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Permission of instructor and department chair required.

Senior Honors

INST 498Y CREDITS: 0.5

The Honors Program is designed to recognize and encourage exceptional scholarship and to allow able students to do more independent work than is otherwise feasible. The senior honors candidate works with members of the international studies faculty to prepare an extended essay on a topic of mutual interest, which is defended before an outside examiner in May. For more detailed information about honors in international studies, see the department chair. Students standing for honors must also take the senior seminar. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Permission of instructor and department chair required.