ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Our world has become globalized, with organizations, corporations, and individuals from around the world interacting on a daily basis. International Studies majors learn the importance of understanding and experiencing diverse cultures and the skills to work together on solutions to global challenges. International Studies is an interdisciplinary major coordinated by the departments of anthropology, business management, economics, history, world languages and cultures, and political science. Our majors combine the required components of the major in an almost limitless combination of courses from these and other departments, both at Washington College and in one or more of our 30 semester-long abroad programs.

STUDY ABROAD

International Studies majors are required to study abroad for one semester. The College offers more than 30 semester-long programs in locations such as London, Hong Kong, Peru, South Africa, and Morocco. Our majors are eligible to apply for Bennett Funds, small grants that may help to offset the cost of airfare or other fees.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

All students who major in International Studies must complete one approved experiential learning activity, which the International Studies program faculty envision as a meaningful educational experience related to international studies outside of the classroom. We believe it is important for students to apply the theories and concepts that they have learned in a “real-world” setting.

- **Internships:** The basic expectation for an internship is that students are engaged in meaningful work for a total of approximately 80 hours (one full day a week) for 10 weeks, two half-days for ten weeks, or a two-week full-time intensive experience.
- **Model Programs:** Participation in a Model Diplomacy or Model UN program together with the two-credit course component.
- **Volunteer Activity:** Completion of a substantial volunteer or advocacy activity outside of class requirements that is related to international studies and has been approved by the Director of International Studies.
- **Additional Study Abroad:** Participation in an additional semester or summer program of study abroad—beyond the one semester required of all International Studies majors. For example, students may wish to remain in the same location to develop greater language fluency, or to experience a different part of the world beyond one’s primary focus of study in order to develop a broader understanding of issues in international studies.

SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The International Studies program offers a choice of two options to complete the Senior Capstone Experience (SCE) requirement: a 30-page minimum research-based thesis or a self-designed project. Under many circumstances, double-majors may complete a single combined capstone project if that is their preference. The SCE must be completed over two semesters under the direction of an assigned capstone advisor. Ordinarily, students initiate the project together with the required International Studies Seminar (INT 491) during the fall semester of the senior year.

RELATED MINORS

- Asian, European, Latin American, and Near Eastern Studies
- Black Studies
- International Business
- Peace and Conflict Studies

AFTER GRADUATION

After graduation, our majors go on to apply their education and skills in a wide range of careers, including business, journalism, teaching, politics, and international and public service. Double majors also find International Studies a useful supplement to all of Washington College’s major fields of study.
WHY INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT WASHINGTON COLLEGE?

1. Our Interdisciplinary Approach

We believe that understanding our globalized world requires tools from many different academic disciplines—not just a focus on one traditional major field of study. Our majors learn to appreciate different cultures from courses in anthropology and foreign languages, to apply economics via a three-course sequence, to consider international politics from both theoretical and historical perspectives and to speak at least one foreign language. The program also includes elective courses in disciplines such as art, music, philosophy, and business management.

2. Study Abroad Opportunities

Students learn valuable information from their ‘IS’ courses, but because the best way to gain an appreciation for other countries and cultures is to experience them firsthand, International Studies majors are required to spend at least one semester at one of WC’s 30 study abroad programs.

3. Hands-on Learning Experiences

International Studies majors not only visit the places they read about via study abroad, but also gain practical experience with programs such as the Model United Nations, student conferences with national and international leaders, and for-credit structured internship programs at the Washington Center in Washington, D.C., and the Hansard Program in London, UK.

4. Double-major or pursue a related minor

Students of any major can take advantage of a unique interdisciplinary approach to studies of a particular geographic region or functional area, such as International Business or Peace and Conflict Studies. Regional area minors are combinations of coursework in history, economics, anthropology, political science, international literature and culture, and other related fields with opportunities abroad in the area of focus.

5. The Goldstein Program in Public Affairs

The Louis B. Goldstein Program in Public Affairs encourages students to enter public service by introducing them to influential, knowledgeable leaders and offering other opportunities to experience careers related to public service. The program sponsors a lecture series that brings journalists, policy analysts, political activists, diplomats, military commanders, and government officials to campus. It also provides funding for student participation in the Model Programs and International Studies conferences, and offers small grants for students seeking summer break internships related to public service.

Ian May ’03

International Studies major

Ian May has always taken the road less traveled. As an undergraduate, he accomplished more in four years than might seem humanly possible: study abroad on four continents, concentrations in Latin American Studies and African Studies, and fluency in Spanish, all wrapped up in a relentless drive to make a difference in the world.

More than a decade later, May continues to push the envelope, now as part of the Army 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) that quietly carries out missions around the world. In addition to earning a medical degree and completing his residency in emergency medicine at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington May has undergone rigorous military training that includes Flight Surgeon School, Airborne School, and Dive Medical Officer School. After graduation, May interned with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State and then joined the Peace Corps. He credits Washington College with providing the strong foundation of education and experiential learning for his career.

“WC had the best of many worlds. Specifically, it was a small school with great student-professor ratios, and it also offered a plethora of study abroad experiences that let you set out your own path. I had all the advantages of a large university without being stuck in a lecture hall with 400 other students,” May says. “The study abroad opportunities I had, traveling to Cuba, Ecuador, Spain, and South Africa, as well as the focus on writing and critical thinking, set up a base for me to continue my education and interact with the larger world.”