
Meet Your Departmental Student Advisor!

Alyssa Rickard
International & Area Studies

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Hometown: Grosse Pointe Farms, MI
Majors: IAS and Political Science
Concentration: African Studies
Study Abroad: Senegal
Favorite Ice Cream Flavor: Starbucks Java Chip
Best Adjective to Describe You: Passionate

In 10 words or less, why should someone want to be a part of this department?

It's interdisciplinary, so it's always intellectually stimulating and exhilarating.

When did you know you wanted to study this area? What pathway led you to this department?

I knew after Fall Quarter of my freshman year because the major best suited my interests. My work with organizations such as Amnesty International led me to this department.

What is the best way to get (and stay) connected to this department?

Talk to Dr. Cohen, the other professors in the department and the DSA, as well as speaking with other students in this department. We are all happy to talk to you about anything. I find the IAS majors have a wide-range of interests and passions that don't simply stay in the classroom but overflow out into the community and the world. That's why we'd be more than happy to speak with anyone who wants to get (and stay) connected to IAS.

What would you miss the most if you were no longer a part of this department?

I would miss the ability to explore a wide-range of interests and departments.

What are your career aspirations/next steps after K?

I'm not sure at the moment but I'm applying for the Fulbright Fellowship and Davis Peace Project along with other programs. It's likely that I'll apply for Law School or a Graduate School with a program in International Studies. The sky is the limit.

What has been the biggest surprise you have encountered at K?

My biggest surprise at K has been how much I love it. I love the K Plan in how it gives students a well-rounded education that is not as easily offered at other schools. Study Abroad and the Internship/ Externship are crucial to the undergraduate process and they are easily available at K. Furthermore, the IAS major requires that you complete a study abroad in your area, which only advances your education in international studies.

How does your department connect to your other interests and activities?

This department connects me with all of my interests and activities. More specifically, I'm very passionate about human rights initiatives and IAS stimulates these interests. I was an intern at TrustAfrica in Dakar, Senegal the summer after my freshman year and at Human Rights First in Washington D.C. the summer before my senior year. IAS has only helped me through these fortunate opportunities.

What has been your favorite class at K? Why?

I have so many favorite classes at K. I can't pick just one. I loved my Freshman Seminar with Dr. Solberg as well as Feminist Political Theories with Dr. Einspahr. I've also enjoyed all my classes in the French department with Mme Dugas and Dr. Dugas' International Political Economy and Politics of Latin America. Oh and Dr. Kato's Intro to American Government.

What is your SIP?

I am comparing political regimes in Senegal and the Cote d'Ivoire to determine why one is relatively peaceful and the other has suffered from a civil war and a coup d'état. I hope to return to Senegal for the month of December to complete my research.
