International and Area Studies

Professor: Dugas (Director)

This program is designed for students who have strong international and regional (area studies) interests and wish to pursue these interests systematically in their academic studies. The program reflects the belief that several kinds of skills and knowledge are essential for understanding the contemporary global system. The first of these is the ability to analyze issues that are global—issues that pertain to the interrelationships among the peoples and states of the world. The second is skill in making explicit, systematic comparisons between dimensions of political, socioeconomic, or cultural life in two or more societies, as well as acquiring the special kinds of insights resulting from such comparative analysis. The third is in-depth knowledge of a particular area of the world—its geography, history, culture, and institutions. These areas may be a state, a subcontinent, or a continent.

With a mix of courses providing global/comparative and area-specific knowledge, mastery of a second language, study abroad, the IAS sophomore and senior seminars, a discipline-specific major or minor, and an internationally-oriented Senior Individualize Project (SIP), students majoring in International and Area Studies should be well prepared to live in and to make sense of the interdependent system of nations and regions that make up the modern world. They will also have received a solid foundation for graduate study and/or further training for careers in the international realm.

The program in international and area studies is open to all students. In addition to meeting formal requirements, majors are urged to consider international Career and Professional Development internships as well as SIPs in consultation with the Career and Professional Development Center.

Requirements for the Major in International and Area Studies

Number of Units
Ten units are required, not including language courses or the SIP.

Required Core Courses

Any History course in an area different from the student's area of geographic study
ANSO 103 Introduction to Society and Culture
ECON 101 Principles of Economics or POLS 375 International Political Economy
IAST 290 Sophomore Seminar
IAST 490 Senior Seminar
POLS 106 Introduction to Comparative Politics or POLS 107 Introduction to International Politics

Other Requirements

1. Area-specific courses: Four (4) courses from at least two different disciplines focusing on a specific area or region (see lists of acceptable courses in each geographic area below). Prior to going on study abroad, an IAS major must pass two courses in her/his area of geographical specialization (in addition to foreign language courses).
2. Foreign Language proficiency: Proficiency in a foreign language appropriate to the student’s geographical area of study at a level equivalent to five (5) units, typically two (2) courses beyond the intermediate level. Literature courses may also count as area-specific courses. This must be a modern spoken language. (This does not preclude a student's also studying an ancient language). A student seeking to fulfill this requirement with a non-traditional language must first petition the Director of the IAS major.
3. Study abroad: IAS majors must complete a long-term (6 month) or extended-term (9 month) study abroad program in their geographical area of study. Long-term participants may apply one course and extended-term participants may apply two courses toward the major.
4. Cognate Minor or Major: IAS majors must have a minor or second major in one of the disciplines recognized by the departments of the College. Students may double count courses toward the fulfillment of a cognate minor or toward
a second major.

5. Comprehensive examinations: The written comprehensive examination for the major in international and area studies will include questions drawn from global and comparative courses and the area of geographical emphasis. Students will be expected to demonstrate an ability to integrate their experiences with a global perspective and to bring a multidisciplinary approach to the analysis and discussion of international and area issues and problems.

Potential majors should consult with the director early in their college careers to assure proper program planning and to obtain a list of appropriate courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to pursue a SIP that incorporates an international and/or area studies dimension.

In order to qualify for honors in the major, an IAS student must meet two of the following three criteria: a minimum of 3.5 GPA in IAS courses (excluding foreign language courses); honors in the senior comprehensive examination; honors on an IAS-related SIP.

Geographical Area of Study

Four units from at least two (2) different departments are required. One (1) of these four courses may be taken while on study abroad; however, the student must supply a syllabus and other detailed information about the content of that course to the IAS program director, who will then determine whether or not it may count.

African Studies

AFST/HIST 104 Introduction to African Studies
AFST/POLS 248 Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
AFST/HIST/WGS 272 Gender Relations in Africa
AFST/HIST 273 Atlantic Slave Trade
AFST/HIST/RELG 274 Islam in Africa
AFST/HIST/RELG 275/SEMN 274 African Christianity
AFST/HIST 276 Civilizations of Africa
AFST/HIST 277 Contemporary Africa
AFST/HIST 279 Special Topics in African History
AFST/ANSO 290 Africa in the Context of Globalization
ENGL-221 African Literature

East Asian Studies

Required Courses:

HIST 103 Introduction to East Asian Civilizations (only offered Winter Term)

Additional Electives:

ANSO/HIST 288 Sports in East Asia
CHIN/IAST 222 20th Century Urban China
Latin American Studies

ANSO 234 Latin America in Global Context
POLS 245 Politics of Latin America
RELG 122 Religions of Latin America
SPAN 401 Topics in Hispanic Culture (when the topic is Latin America)
SPAN 435 Advanced Literary Studies (when topic is Spanish-American literature)
SPAN 445 Visual Practices in Latin America
SPAN 455 Limits of Genre: Latin America
SPAN 475 From Conquest and Colonization to Cultural Independence
SPAN 480 Revolutions, Experimentation, and World Recognition
SPAN 485 Undoing the Nation: Contemporary Cultural Manifestations
SPAN 492 Spanish-American Seminar

Western European Studies

Given the richness of the College curriculum related to modern Europe, the requirements for European area studies are somewhat more specific than are those for other areas. In particular, students must choose two courses (from different departments) that deal with modern Europe and two courses that relate to a specific nation.

Modern Europe

Two units from different departments.
ARTX 150 Survey of Art II: 1600-1945
ARTX 223 The Long 19th-Century Art
HIST 237 Women in European Society
HIST 254 History, Memory, and Identity in Modern Europe
HIST 259 Special Topics in Modern European History
HIST/RELG 263 Jews in Changing Europe
HIST 394 Seminar in Modern European History
PHIL 109 Existentialism and Film
PHIL 207 18th-Century Philosophy
PHIL 208 19th-Century Philosophy
POLS 231/SEMN 209 The Politics of Rights & Immigration
POLS 270 The European Union: Institutions, Actors, Aliens, and Outcomes
POLS 330 The Politics of the Holocaust
POLS 335 The Politics of Contemporary Antisemitism
THEA 280 The Theatre of Revolt: Modernism and Post-Modernism in Western Theatre

British Studies

ENGL 265, 266, 268 (British Literature), 435 (when the topic is British literature)

French Studies

ARTX 223 The Long 19th-Century Art
FREN 301 (when the topic is French literature), 401 (when the topic is French culture), 435 (when the topic is French literature), 490 (French literature)
HIST 244 French Revolution and Napoleon

German Studies

GERM 200 (German film, taught in English)
GERM 301, 410, 411, 420, 430, 435, 490 (German literature and cinema)
GERM 470 Contemporary German Culture

Spanish Studies

SPAN 401 (when the topic is Spanish culture)
SPAN 465, 470, 491 (Spanish literature)

International and Area Studies courses

IAST 222 20th-Century Urban China
This course interrogates literary and cinematic representations of Chinese cities in the twentieth century. By examining urban narrative in Chinese fiction, drama, poetry and film from the Republican and People's Republic periods, this class offers a new understanding of Chinese modernity as marked by its unique urban sensibilities and configurations.

IAST 290 Sophomore Seminar
The sophomore seminar in international and area studies is intended to provide an opportunity for IAST majors to bring their skill in comparative study and their knowledge of a specific area of the globe together around a common theme. Students will compare the regional and area similarities and differences with regard to the topic of the seminar as well as develop increased expertise in their area of focus through exploration of the seminar topic's ramifications in that region. While specific topics change from year to year, possible topics include, but are not restricted to hunger, war, the environment, international relations, population and migration, human geography and ecology, race and class, religious fundamentalism, the literature of women, and the literature of war. This course does NOT satisfy the Shared Passages Sophomore Seminar requirement.
Prerequisite: Sophomore IAST Majors Only

IAST 290 Immigration Politics
According to the UN Charter of Fundamental Rights, one has a fundamental right to leave one's country of origin (1948, Article 13), yet there is no corresponding right to enter another country. This seminar considers the consequence of this tension with attention to normative questions of who should be allowed entry to and citizenship within (other) states and explores the empirical complexities that inform and result from these judgments.

IAST 490 Senior Seminar
Consideration of issues and problems affecting the global whole and the various geographical areas of the world through focusing on a broad topic or theme; emphasis on discussion of the topic and problems from a broadly interdisciplinary perspective. Specific topics will change from year to year. For 2019-2020 our focus is on human rights theories and practices.
Prerequisite: Senior IAST Majors Only
The Academic Catalog contains the most accurate information available at the time of publication. Statements contained therein are not contractual obligations, and verbal or other representations that are inconsistent with or not contained within the catalogues’ offerings or policies are not binding. Kalamazoo College reserves the right to change, without specific notice, offerings, policies, procedures, qualifications, fees, and other conditions.

This content was last updated on December 20 2019.