

Major Requirements (BA)

Requirements for the major include either 33 credit hours, plus demonstrated proficiency in a modern second language. The major requires 3 required introductory courses, 3 advanced courses in a specific geographic region, 3 advanced courses in specific a topic concentration, a research methods course, and a senior seminar in which students complete an original capstone research project.

For a complete list of major requirements, please visit the online [Course Catalog](#).

For students who declared the major prior to the Fall 2015 semester, please review prior program requirements in the [archived online Course Catalog](#) or speak with an academic advisor.

Please review our [main campus](#) and [study abroad course lists](#) for a full list of courses that can be applied to the IR major.

Introductory Courses

The International Relations major requires introductory courses in three fields to provide a solid interdisciplinary base on which to build a more specialized course of study.

- PSC 124 International Relations or PSC 139 International Relations (Honors)
- ECN 203 Economic Ideas and Issues or ECN 101 Introductory Microeconomics
- MAX 132 Global Community, or ANT 185 Global Encounters: Comparing World Views & Values Cross-Culturally

To be eligible to declare the undergraduate major in International Relations, students must achieve a grade of 'B' or better in at least one of these required introductory courses, taken at Syracuse University.

Geographic Region

International organization and cooperation takes on distinct characteristics in different world regions. We require each major to select one geographic region for specialized study. Majors choose from among the following:

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East/North Africa

Topic Concentration

Because the field of International Relations is so broad and rich, we require our majors to select a topical concentration for specialized study in one main aspect of the field. Each major selects from among the following:

- **Intercultural Communication**
ICC encompasses the study of identity and cultural contact in the contemporary world. As globalization increases connections among individuals and groups with differing ideals, traditions, and customs, examining culture as a driving force in international affairs is crucial. Often, studies in ICC focus on how actors create meaning and interpret their social position in an international context.
- **International Law and Organizations**
ILO examines the structure of international organizations, international legal systems, and the creation of international norms such as human rights. Nongovernmental and civil society organizations also play an important role in shaping interactions between international actors.
- **International Political Economy**
IPE examines the structure of the global economy as well as its political and social consequences. Among many other topics, IPE scholars study economic trade, migration, environmental sustainability, and pandemic health concerns. From changing valuation of currencies to the global impact of the environmental challenges, the interconnectedness of a global economy influences international actors at all levels.
- **International Security and Diplomacy**
ISD examines how states and other groups pursue their interests via diplomacy, the development of foreign policy, and the deployment of military forces. As states compete with each other for territory and resources, they must also contend with foreign and domestic challenges to their authority and power.

Research Methods

A deep understanding of international relations requires the capacity to consume and evaluate the academic research of other scholars, and to produce such analysis on one's own. For this reason, our majors complete one introductory course in research methods. Students are strongly encouraged to seek training in the method(s) that will be most relevant to their Senior Capstone projects.

Foreign Language

To develop adequate understanding of other cultures and peoples, to gain access to primary sources, and to prepare for study abroad and future careers in international affairs, students need proficiency in a second language. We strongly recommend that students choose a language that matches with their chosen regional concentration.

Our majors must demonstrate language proficiency by completing coursework through the 202 (Course IV) level OR by demonstrating proficiency equivalent to that level through a proficiency exam administered by Syracuse University's Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics. Students fulfilling the language requirement through a proficiency exam must present a formal petition to the International Relations Office. Please meet with a major advisor for more information about the petition requirements.

Exemptions for native speakers can be made when pre-college instruction was in a language other than English and when the student completes English for Non-Native Speakers through ENL 213.

Capstone

The senior capstone for the major in International Relations requires an original substantive research project combining the student's topic and region concentrations. The capstone requirement is typically met by completion of an in-depth research project undertaken in the context of an approved 400-level research seminar offered by the IR Program or by any of the social science departments within the Maxwell School.

Capstone projects provide students with an opportunity for intellectual and professional development through the pursuit of original scholarly research on contemporary questions relevant to their areas of concentration. On occasion, our students are able to [publish their research](#) in undergraduate academic journals.

Senior Seminar students must complete the [Capstone Planning Form](#) (upon open, click the download button to open a fillable .pdf)

Additional helpful materials:

[Capstone Checklist](#)

[Capstone Proposal Guide](#)

[Capstone FAQs](#)