

Majoring in

International Studies

Description of International Studies

What is international studies?

International studies is the study of cultural, social, economic, and political issues that confront the world community or specific geographical region.

What do international studies majors study?

International studies majors study global and international issues from the perspective of humanities, social sciences, political science, and related fields. It prepares students for decision making in a changing world. Majors learn about the search for world order, law, and human rights. They study the political, ethnic, and religious responses to what is perceived as cultural and economic homogenization on a global scale

What skills are important for an international studies major?

International studies majors should be:

- Able to understand and relate well to people of different cultures;
- Able to speak at least one foreign language; and
- Able to express themselves in both written and oral communications.

What else do international studies majors study?

International studies are liberal arts majors with a variety of courses to develop knowledge and skills that can be applied in personal and professional settings.

Liberal arts courses provide a background to strengthen critical thinking; problem solving; written, oral, and interpersonal communication; quantitative, analytical, and reasoning skills. These skills are also considered very important for success in the workplace.

Course Requirements

General education: About 60 credit hours of general education courses are required. These courses give a broad range of knowledge in science, math, writing, arts, ethics, civilization, literature, human behavior, and urban environment.

Major courses: A minimum of 31 credit hours of courses must be completed in the major. A minimum of 2.25 GPA is required in major courses, such as:

- Anthropology of development and globalization
- Cross-cultural communication
- Global ethics and world's religions
- Human societies and globalization
- International management
- International political economy
- International relations
- Language groups in the U.S.
- Politics of developing areas

International studies majors are required to choose a major from *global studies* (includes arts in the global perspective, health in the global perspective, international institutions and globalization, international relations, international social justice studies or social relations in international perspective) or *area studies* (includes African, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, Russian and Eastern European, and Western European studies).

Minor: About 18 credits. International studies majors must complete a minor in one of the following fields: anthropology, economics, general business, French, German, history, Italian, Latin and Roman studies, political science, sociology, Spanish, or urban studies. Double majors are strongly encouraged.

Careers in International Studies

Some areas of employment entered by international studies majors with appropriate experience and education include the following:

- Customer service representative
- Customs official
- FBI agent
- Food and wine sales representative
- Foreign news correspondent
- Foreign service officer
- Government consultant
- Hotel manager
- Import/export agent
- Intelligence agent
- International airline employee
- International law
- International student advisor
- Interpreter
- Investment securities broker
- Librarian
- Museum curator
- Peace Corps volunteer
- Public relations information specialist
- Retail manager
- Translator
- Travel agent

International studies majors are strongly encouraged to participate in a study-abroad program. Summer study-abroad programs provide short-term immersion in the language, culture, and civilization of the countries they visit. VCU is also a member of the International Student Exchange Program, which offers a junior year abroad at one of 40 universities world-wide.

Next Steps

If you are interested in learning more about becoming an international studies major at VCU, consider doing each of the following things. Check them off as you complete each step.

- Check out the VCU School of World Studies

webpage.

- Take an intermediate or advanced foreign language or course.
- Read about the international studies major in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*.
- Review the international studies major graduation worksheet with an academic advisor.
- Talk to one or more upper-level international studies students about their major.
- Discuss the major with one or more School of World Studies professors.
- Go to the Career Center to read about careers in international studies.
- Go to the VCU bookstore and browse in the international studies textbook section.
- Explore internship possibilities through the Career Center and the School of World Studies.
- Visit with the director of study-abroad program to discuss options available.
- Read specific information about careers in the Occupational Outlook Handbook located at www.bls.gov/oco.

Virginia Commonwealth University

**College of
Humanities & Sciences**

School of World Studies

Lafayette Hall
P.O. Box 842021
Richmond, VA 23284

Phone: (804) 827-1111

School of World Studies website:

<http://www.has.vcu.edu/wld/>



This brochure is published by
University College in cooperation
with the School of World Studies

