SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC POLICY

International Security Studies

International Security Studies Handbook

2022-2023

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In this handbook we provide details regarding the rules and procedures relevant to the International Security Studies master's program offered by the School of Government & Public Policy (SGPP) at the University of Arizona. It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with the general campus-wide requirements and information on transfer of graduate credit from other institutions, off-campus graduate study, scholastic standards, forms that the student must submit to the Graduate College, and the time limit for the completion of requirements for graduate degrees.

Please be sure to consult the following Graduate College sites for information on Graduate College policies and resources:

- Academic Services
- New and Current Students

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the ISS program is to educate the next generation of analysts, scholars, and practitioners in the security problems faced by governments in today's international environment. The program is tailored to students who work full-time and need a flexible curriculum that offers a wide range of courses designed for a variety of practical and intellectual interests. The program is fully online, with courses taught by University of Arizona faculty with expertise in international security-related topics. The program therefore provides a highly flexible professional curriculum taught by experts in their field. Courses are designed to be rigorous and demanding, and to give students the skills and background to seek a career in governmental, non-government, corporate, and academic fields.

STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

Overview

The Master of Arts (MA) in International Security Studies requires 34 units of course work.

The ISS Program is designed to be flexible for students, to take courses at their own pace and to focus on subject areas that are most relevant and interesting to them. As a result, there are no core classes or required concentrations. Students have six years to complete the degree based on their schedule and needs; most students finish their degree within two years.

Students must finish the ISS program by completing one of our capstone options. The majority of students complete the Professional Portfolio (POL 695A), which is considered the standard capstone option, worth 1 credit-hour. However, select students can pursue the thesis option, worth 4 credit-hours. As the thesis option is considered a deviation from the normal ISS plan, students must seek approval from the program administrators before they can pursue the thesis option. This leaves two options for students to complete the ISS MA, as described in Table 1.

Table 1. Credit-hour Plans for the ISS Master's Degree

Option 1		Option 2	
Course Type	*Units*	*Course Type*	*Units*
Substantive Courses	33 Units	Substantive Courses	30 Units
POL 695A	1 Units	Thesis Project	4 Units
Total	34 Units	*Total*	34 Units

The two broad types of courses, substantive courses and capstone courses, are described in more detail below.

Substantive Courses

Substantive ISS courses are worth 3 credit hours. An overview of ISS courses offered in the 2023-2024 academic year are available in Table 2.

Table 2. 2023-2024 Courses in Catalog

Course Number	Course Name
POL 511A	The Psychology of Group Conflict and Cooperation
POL 516A	Strategic Nonviolent Conflict
POL 519	Terrorism and Counterterrorism
POL 520A	How Terrorism Ends
POL 521A	Transnational Organized Crime and National Security
POL 523A	Immigration and Border Security
POL 530A	Dynamics of Civil Wars
POL 540A	Global Political Economy
POL 542A	European Politics and Society
POL 544A	Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
POL 545A	Security in New Democracies
POL 546A	Politics of Islamism
POL 547A	Crime and Violence in Latin America
POL 551	Russian Foreign Policy
POL 553A	Media and International Affairs
POL 554A	Constitutional Law and American Foreign Policy
POL 555	American Foreign Policy
POL 556A	Issues in Cybersecurity and Cyberwar
POL 557A	The Politics of Cybersecurity
POL 558A	Politics in the Digital Age
POL 559A	Comparing US and EU Democracy Promotion Policy in the MENA Region
POL 561A	Concepts of Human Rights and Security
POL 563A	Gender as a Component of International Security
POL 564	International Relations of East Asia
POL 565A	International Politics of the Middle East
POL 567A	Emerging Powers in the Global System
POL 569A	Armed Conflict
POL 578A	Geospatial Intelligence: Foundations and Concepts
POL 579	Intelligence and US National Security
POL 580A	Mexican National Security
POL 581A	Domestic Politics and American Foreign Policy
POL 582A	International Law and Organizations
POL 583A	Global Health Security
POL 588A	The Politics of Energy Security
POL 589A	Arming the State
POL 593	Internship
POL 599	Independent Study
*POL 695A**	*Professional Colloquium*
*POL 910**	*Thesis Credits*

*Capstone courses

Independent studies (POL 599) and internships (POL 593) are only offered if requested by the student, and they require approval from the academic adviser or program director. More details on these courses are below.

Internships

Students can substitute a substantive course for an internship, equal to 3 credit-hours (POL 593). To be eligible, the internship must meet the following conditions:

- It is a formal internship, and not a part of the student's day-to-day job/occupation
- It lasts a minimum of 135 hours
- It is approved by the Program Director (kurzer@arizona.edu)
- Once the internship is approved, the following must be completed to gain credit:
- Before beginning the internship, students must sign a Letter of Agreement that overviews the work to be completed.
- Once the internship is finished two Evaluation Forms must be completed. These forms are available in the Appendix.
- Finally, a brief report must be completed. This is the student's opportunity to evaluate the internship in light of their completed course work, by drawing connections to their completed classwork and detailing what was learned during the internship. The report should be around 1,500-2,000 words in length. The essay should be submitted to the Program Director (Prof. Kurzer).

Independent Studies

Students are also able to substitute a substantive course for an independent study (POL 599). An independent study is typically worth 3-credit hours, but can be reduce to 1 or 2 credit-hours if needed due to circumstance.

Independent studies will only be granted if a student has a desire to engage in an in-depth research project. In other words, independent studies are given to satisfy a student's academic interest. Independent studies must be approved by the ISS Director (Prof. Kurzer).

Capstone Projects

Professional Colloquium

The capstone project for the ISS program is the Professional Colloquium. The colloquium course (POL 695A) counts for one unit and consists of a portfolio that summarizes their academic achievements.

This final course has two major objectives: first, there is an academic goal for each student to consider and synthesize what has been learned in the program, including how their studies have added to their knowledge of international security topics, overall world view, and how education can contribute to professional advancement. Second, the portfolio's professional goal is to provide students with tools to advance in the professional world, including writing a professional bio, updating their resume, and providing writing samples. Students also have the option to produce a personal website that can be shared with employers.

Master's Thesis

Select students may be interested in pursuing a thesis project in place of the portfolio. The thesis is worth 4 units; as a result, students need to complete only 30 units of substantive course work.

The thesis is a minimum 25-page (6,500 words) academic research project, with at least 15 different scholarly or refereed sources. To be eligible for a thesis, students must:

1. Have a GPA of 3.8 or higher after taking a minimum of 9 courses in the ISS program
2. Gain approval from one of the ISS faculty to be a thesis adviser
3. Have the adviser and project approved by the program director

A successful thesis proposal should include the following elements:

The question to be asked in the paper (see below)

A 1-2 paragraph statement of the significance of this question for the study of international security such as what theoretical questions, debates or controversies will answering your question help to resolve? if it's not obvious, a BRIEF explanation (just 1 or 2 sentences) of why answering your question is of substantive or policy importance

- Your proposed answer to the question (necessarily preliminary, but you must have an informed hypothesis at this time)
- A list of major alternative hypothesized answers to the problem, which you will generate by drawing on common sense and on political science/international relations theories you encountered in other ISS courses.
- An explanation of how you will evaluate the merits of your own proposed answer versus the competing hypotheses:
- What evidence (data) would support or refute your argument, and competing hypothesis? Try asking yourself, "what evidence in the world would convince me that my theory is wrong?"
- A bibliography indicating where you will get the primary and secondary data that you need to test your argument against alternative hypotheses (the bibliography is not included in the page limit)

Your research question should address something that is PUZZLING, and should generally be phrased as WHY question: We expect (based on the following theories or patterns) to see this, but we see that; WHY do we see this rather than that?

The thesis committee will be made up of the student's faculty adviser along with the ISS Director.

ACCELERATED MASTER'S PROGRAM (AMP) INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

Overview

The ISS program offers exceptional undergraduate students in selected majors the opportunity to earn both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in as few as 5 years. The Accelerated Master's Program (AMP) is for the top undergraduates in participating majors who plan to continue with their post-graduate education in the online M.A. in International Security Studies.

The AMP is only open to students from the following four (online) undergraduate degree programs:

- Accelerated Master of International Security Studies – *online Bachelor's in Law*
- Accelerated Master of International Security Studies – *BAS in Online Intelligence and Information Operations (IIO)*
- Accelerated Master of International Security Studies – *online Bachelor's in Political Science, General Concentration*
- Accelerated Master of International Security Studies – *online Bachelor's in Public Management & Policy, Public Policy Concentration*

Only students who are enrolled in one of these four undergraduate degree programs are eligible to apply to the AMP. The advantage of the AMP is that students can earn both undergraduate and graduate credits simultaneously as the ISS graduate course work counts for both the undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. For more information, visit the ISS AMP website.

AMP Admissions Criteria

Completion of a minimum of 75 undergraduate credit hours will be required at the time of application; a minimum of 90 undergraduate credit hours will be required at the time of entry into the AMP. If the student's GPA falls below 3.3 at the time they have completed 90 units, the student will not be admitted into the program. Courses taken for audit may not be included in the total number of units counted for eligibility or admission.

- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 on a minimum of 12 units of undergraduate coursework at the UA.
- Completion of at least 12 earned undergraduate credits in their major at the University of Arizona. Units still graded Incomplete, units graded Pass/Fail or units taken as audit will not count toward the requirement of the 12 undergraduate units.
- Completion or near completion of general education requirements (no more than one course remaining).
- Submission of a graduate application and payment of a graduate application fee.
- Demonstration of the maturity necessary for success in an accelerated, highly competitive program.
- Expectation to complete the undergraduate degree within four years. The undergraduate degree requirements must be completed before the student is eligible to obtain the Master's degree.

AMP Sample Plan

1. 1. Freshman, Sophomore, & Junior year: Complete undergraduate coursework
2. 2. Senior year:
   a. Fall Semester: select two of the following courses and complete remaining undergraduate coursework
      i. POL 553A: Media and International Affairs (3 units)
      ii. POL 542A: European Politics and Society (3 units)
      iii. POL 555: American Foreign Policy (3 units)
   b. Spring Semester: select two of the following courses and complete remaining undergraduate coursework
      i. POL 561A: Concepts of Human Rights and Security (3 units)
      ii. POL 557A: Politics of Cyber Security (3 units)
      iii. POL 558A: Politics in the Digital Age (3 units)

NON-DEGREE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The Certificate in International Security Studies is a 12-credit hour program.

Students can take any four of the substantive ISS courses towards the Certificate. Students cannot apply transfer credit, independent studies, or internship credits to the Certificate.

There is no capstone project for the Certificate.

Transfer to the MA Program

Certificate students are eligible to transfer to the MA program if they are interested in expanding their studies and they have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the Certificate program. Up to 12 credits taken as a certificate student can be transferred to the MA.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives of the ISS program are to enable students to:

1. Identify the central themes of modern security studies, especially as related to the student's concentration and interests. This may include:
   a. Traditional security threats, such as war and violence.
   b. Non-traditional security threats, such as the environment, resource management, and human security.
   c. Foreign policy, including foreign policy creation, the influence of important foreign policy actors, and areas of foreign policy (such as democracy promotion).
   d. The influence of globalization.
2. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and explain international security phenomena as well as the broad theories and principles of international security studies.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the analysis and evaluation of the modern security environment and foreign policies.
4. Build and present arguments relating to international security, by conducting original research, generating arguments, and communicating those arguments through academic writing.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The ISS Director (Prof. Kurzer) serves as the academic adviser to all ISS students.

Students are able to enroll themselves in classes and are able to design any course plan that fits their schedule and needs. If students have any questions about this process, they should contact the adviser by email at any time. In person or phone/video call meetings can be set up as needed by email. The adviser will also have office hours if students happen to be local or in the Tucson area.

Students are expected to fill out their Plan of Study (POS) during their second semester in the ISS program, to be completed before finishing the capstone course. The POS will include the student's expected graduation date, include all courses the student plans to take, all transfer credits, and indicate which capstone project the student will pursue. The adviser will communicate instructions to all incoming students about this process, and students should contact the adviser with any questions.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students in the ISS program must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 in all UA graduate course work. This includes graduate course work taken outside of the ISS program at the UA, as well as all ISS coursework, whether it will be used on a student's Plan of Study or not.

A GPA of 3.0 or above, in all UA graduate coursework, must be maintained to be awarded an MA or a Certificate.

Students have six years to complete the program. Any transfer coursework also needs to have been taken during the six-year period of time from their expected graduation date. After six years, credits will "expire" and can no longer be counted towards a student's Plan of Study.

Probation

Students who fall below 3.0 at any time will be put on probation.

Should this occur, students will have one semester to bring their GPA up to 3.0 in order to continue in the program. Any student who fails to raise their GPA to a 3.0 in this period will be disqualified from the program

Admissions Criteria

To be admitted into the MA program, students must:

- Have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution
- Have a GPA of 3.0 or above during the last 60-units of the undergraduate degree
- OR: if graduate work has been completed, have a GPA of 3.0 or above from graduate work

To be admitted into the Certificate program, students must:

- Have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution
- Have a GPA of 2.75 or above during the last 60-units of the undergraduate degree
- OR: if graduate work has been completed, have a GPA of 2.75 or above from graduate work

Applicants with a Low GPA

Students with a low GPA, defined here as a GPA that is below that admissions standard for the relevant program,[1] can still join the program by applying for Non-Degree-Seeking (NDS) status. Once the student has completed 2-3 courses with a B or higher, the student will be able to (re) apply to the M.A. program.

In exception circumstances, the ISS program will consider submitting a GPA waiver for students who graduated from college with a low GPA but have accrued in the meantime years of relevant work experiences.

In case it is decided to submit a low GPA petition, two additional application materials are required:

1. A statement from the student explaining the low GPA and why they believe they will be successful in graduate school

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[1] A GPA below admissions standards are less than a 3.0 for the MA program, and less than 2.75 for the Certificate program.

2. A letter of recommendation, testifying to their ability to successfully complete graduate work, from somebody able to make that judgement

Based on the decision of the ISS Program, made by the Program Director (Prof. Kurzer), a petition will be submitted to the Graduate College on behalf of the student to waive the GPA requirement. No petition is guaranteed as the Graduate College has the final decision.

Non-Degree Status

If the Program Director chooses to not write a petition for admissions despite a low GPA, students are able to pursue ISS coursework under a non-degree status.

Students must take a minimum of 6 units and earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher in order to be eligible to apply for the MA program. If a student is accepted into the MA program, up to 12 units taken as a non-degree student can be applied to the MA.

Transfer Credits

Up to 6 credit hours may be transferred into the MA program. To be eligible the courses must:

- Be approved by the ISS Director
- Have an A or B grade
- Be taken from an accredited institution
- Be taken within six years of completing the ISS program
- Meet all Graduate College rules

The Graduate College has the final say in the approval of all transfer credits. This includes both approving the credit and awarding the number of units (e.g., credits taken on a quarter system may be awarded a different number of equivalent units at the UA).

For more please consult the [Graduate College website.](#)

Leave of Absence

If students require time off, they can apply for a Leave of Absence. This will keep the student status active while s/he take a break from coursework. When returning from a Leave of Absence, students can register for courses without having to reapply for the degree program. University policy allows students to leave the university for up to two semesters without needing to reapply upon returning.

A Leave of Absence is only required if a student does not take courses for the entire fall or entire spring semesters. To file a Leave of Absence, a Leave of Absence form must be submitted through GradPath in UAccess. For more information about GradPath, consult this page on [FAQ](#).

Incompletes

If a student is unable to finish his or her coursework by the end of the term, a grade of "I" (Incomplete) can be awarded by the instructor. This grade is only to be given if all but a small portion of the coursework is completed (a minimum of 75% of the coursework has been completed), and only if deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students have one year to complete their coursework and for the instructor to change the I grade into a regular grade (A-E). At the end of this one-year period, the grade will automatically convert into an E if the student does not finish the coursework. This E grade will count towards the GPA calculation. In

extreme circumstances, a petition can be submitted to the Graduate College to extend this one-year period.

Instructors are encouraged, but not required, to use the University's Report of Incomplete Grade form as a contract between the student and instructor.

Report of Incomplete Grade form.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT

Graduate College Policies

It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with Graduate College requirements on transfer credits, scholastic standards, forms that the student must submitted, and the time limit for the completion of requirements for graduate degrees, and additional policies. If students have a question about any of these policies or requirements, they are expected to contact either the ISS adviser or their Graduate College representative for clarification.

The following Graduate College sites can be consulted for more information on Graduate College policies and resources:

- Academic Services
- New and Current Students

Appropriate Behavior

All ISS students are also encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog.

Opinions related to international security topics are diverse, and students should both accept and respect that diversity in opinion. As colleagues exploring these issues students are expected to treat their classmates with respect. Arguments are legitimate within the context of an intellectual or academic exchange; personal insults will not be tolerated.

The following UA sites can be consulted for more information on these policies and resources:

- UA Code of Academic Integrity Resources
- Threatening Behavior by Students

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Tuition and Fees

ISS students will be charged $700 per credit hour. There are no ISS course fees or program fees.

There is a mandatory fee that all students must pay, which is dictated by the UA administration for the UA Online Campus.

More information on tuition and fees can be found by visiting the UA's tuition calculator.

Funding Information

There are no funding opportunities available through the ISS program (such as Graduate or Teaching Assistantships).

INTERNAL APPEALS

In the case that a student has an issue with an instructor, their grade, another student, or any other ISS-related matter, they should contact either the Program Director (Prof. Kurzer). We will consider all matters carefully and fairly, and either resolve them internally or seek resolution by contacting the relevant third parties. This could include an instructor, student, or administrator.

If a student has any issues with the Graduate College or another University of Arizona body, students are encouraged to contact either the Program Director (Prof. Kurzer). We will direct students to the correct petition or contact to best address their issue.

APPENDIX

ISS Program Forms

All program-specific forms can be found here. At this time, the internship forms are the only program-specific forms for the ISS program. The Internship forms are available following this page.

Additional Forms

Other forms are either at the Graduate College (e.g., petitions) or University level (e.g., Incomplete Report). Information on all forms mentioned in the ISS Handbook can be found here:

- Report of Incomplete Grade form
- Leave of Absence form
- Petition form

Letter of Agreement

Intern's Name: Click here to enter text.

Agency: Click here to enter text.

Agency Supervisor: Click here to enter text.

Agency Telephone: Click here to enter text.

Faculty Advisor: Click here to enter text.

Period of Internship: Click here to enter text.

Salary: Click here to enter text.

Description of Tasks: [A separate page may be attached if preferable]

Signatures:

_____   _____
Intern   Date   Agency Supervisor   Date

_____   _____
Faculty Advisor   Date   Graduate Programs Director   Date

Evaluation of Internship by Agency Supervisor

Intern: Click here to enter text.

Agency: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor Telephone: Click here to enter text.

1. In what ways was this internship of value to your agency?

2. In what areas did this intern demonstrate particular strength? In what "areas did this intern show a need for improvement? (You might consider such areas as analytic, interpersonal, and communication skills.)

3. What problems arose during the internship that would be helpful to know about for future internships?

Other Comments:

Evaluation of Internship by the Students

Intern: Click here to enter text.

Agency: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor: Click here to enter text.

Supervisor Telephone: Click here to enter text.

Faculty Advisor: Click here to enter text.

1. Was your experience valuable to you as a student? Did your activities reflect the activities of the agency?

2. Do you feel that the internship was valuable to the agency?

3. Would you recommend this agency for future interns?

4. Are there any other changes in the internship process that you would suggest to make it a more useful experience?

Other Comments: