

A Proposal for the Jackson Institute's "Global Affairs" Major

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1 Background

The Jackson Institute for Global Affairs (hereafter "Jackson") opened its doors and began offering courses in September 2010. Jackson inherited the International Studies major from the now-sunsetted Council on International Affairs. Upon assuming the directorship of Jackson, Levinsohn made it clear that restructuring the International Affairs major was his first priority.

The first step to this restructuring was to listen. We have now spoken to every current IS major as well as to a number of students for whom the IS major was considered and not selected. While there are certainly varying views, a few messages were consistent. First, the IS major lacked intellectual coherence. Over time, the IS major has incorporated literally dozens of courses from at least ten different departments into its curriculum, diluting the program's emphasis on providing students with a shared grounding in the study of international affairs. Several voiced a desire for courses that were grounded in contemporary global affairs. Many mentioned that the major also lacked any sense of community—something that is not entirely surprising since students did not take a core set of courses together.

The IS major also experimented with a year-long seminar that spanned the spring of the junior year and the fall of the senior year. The results of this experiment were mixed. While in principle it makes some sense, the realities of faculty leaves, students switching majors, and visiting faculty who typically only visit for a single academic year (or term) presented challenges.

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As a secondary-only major, students voiced frustration with the large number of required courses needed for the double major. Students in the IS major had little room for exploring courses in fields beyond their primary major and IS. We believe it is unfortunate that a student in the IS major has minimal latitude to try out courses in unrelated fields (other than those in his/her primary major.)

After these conversations, we concluded that the major as it is currently configured can and should be improved. A committee was convened consisting of Prof. Elizabeth Bradley (Public Health), Prof. Patrick Cohrs (History) and us.

2 Overview

We propose the replacement of the International Studies major with a new stand-alone (as opposed to secondary) major— Global Affairs. The new name much better reflects the focus of the major. That focus is an understanding of contemporary global affairs informed by the social sciences. The major will have its own core courses and its own senior capstone project. Other courses in the major will be drawn from cross-listed courses with other departments.

The Global Affairs major will offer two “tracks” (as opposed to the five in the current IS major.) The first track is “International Development” and the second track is “International Security.” The international development track will focus on economic development in the so-called less developed countries. This track will also include the field of global health as it relates to public health issues in these countries. The international security track will focus on issues around international relations and diplomacy. Clearly, the two tracks are not intellectually distinct and there will be some overlap. Global Affairs majors will select one of the two tracks as their focus.

The Global Affairs major will also draw on the expertise of the Jackson Fellows, prominent practitioners who will be teaching courses for the major. These courses will typically be electives. The core courses will be taught by regular faculty. The capstone project for the major will be participation in a policy taskforce. This will be a small class that works on a specific problem and presents its findings and recommendations to an actual “client.”

Students selected for the major will receive full funding for an internship in the field of Global Affairs. This internship can be anywhere in the world and Global Affairs majors will have the benefit of the Jackson Institute’s career services office in finding a suitable internship. Jackson Fellows are also a valuable resource for finding a meaningful summer internship.

The Global Affairs major will also offer service courses for all Yale College students. An example of such a course is Global Affairs 101— Gateway to Global Affairs that currently has about 200 students.

3 Organization

The Global Affairs major will be small and selective. The major will be by application only. Students will apply in the spring of their sophomore year. We anticipate an entering class on the order of only 50 students. This is smaller than the current IS major, so any concerns about taking students from departments should be allayed. Indeed, through cross-listing of new Global Affairs courses, departmental offerings will be expanded. An example is the new INTS course being offered this year on China and cross-listed as a 300-level course in Economics. That course also has on the order of 200 students.

Global Affairs majors will select either the International Development or the International Security track but will be required to take the core course for each track. They can then choose electives to concentrate in one of the tracks.

Global Affairs majors will be required to demonstrate proficiency (to L5 level) in one language other than English by the time of graduation.

The capstone project will be run in the fall of the student's senior year. There will be about 5 policy task forces each year with topics that will vary from year to year. Examples include a task force to recommend economic policies to diversify the economy of the United Arab Emirates—the team would report their findings to the government in Abu Dhabi; a task force on evaluating the effectiveness of counter-insurgency tactics in Afghanistan and the team would report findings to high ranking military leaders in the Pentagon; social entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation and the team will work with a budding NGO in India to raise incomes in a sustainable manner. These are examples of the task forces we are currently planning. Each task force will require collective input and result in an off-site final output (typically a briefing.)

The major is decidedly not a pre-professional major, but rather truly an interdisciplinary liberal arts major. One example is such a program currently in existence is the undergraduate major at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton. The major is intended to appeal to students who want to better understand and eventually impact the world around them. The job of the major is to give them the tools they will need to succeed. We'd like to combine soft hearts with hard minds.

We propose the following sequence of courses for the Global Affairs major:

- *Courses Completed Prior to Application:* Introduction to Microeconomics (Econ 108, 110, or 115) and Introduction to Macroeconomics (Econ 111 or 116)
- *Core Courses for each track:* Introduction to International Development and Introduction to International Security. (These courses will be new courses and do not currently exist.)
- *Quantitative Reasoning:* INTS 201
- *Development Track:* Intermediate Microeconomics (Econ 121 or 125) and four electives in the Development track.
- *International Security Track:* Five electives in the Security track.
- *Research Design:* One course of qualitative or quantitative research methods

- *Capstone*: Task Force capstone project (one semester) in student's designated track
- *Non-Credit*: Students must demonstrate L5 proficiency in one language other than English

For students in the Development track, the 12 courses would thus be:

1. Intro Microeconomics
2. Intro Macroeconomics
3. Intermediate Microeconomics
4. Track A Intro
5. Track B Intro
6. INTS 201
7. Research Methods
8. 4 courses in major Track
9. Capstone Task force

For students in the Security track, the 12 courses would thus be:

1. Intro Microeconomics
2. Intro Macroeconomics
3. Track A Intro
4. Track B Intro
5. INTS 201
6. Research Methods
7. 5 courses in major Track
8. Capstone Task force

Courses from Global Affairs, History, Political Science, Economics, and Global Health will be designated as qualifying as an elective in either track (or both.) We anticipate creating several new Global Affairs courses and every one will count towards one of the tracks (or both.) We will also establish a procedure by which any course may petition to count toward the major but we anticipate fairly tight gate-keeping. We do, however, welcome petitions to study abroad during junior year, especially at peer institutions that teach comparable courses.