

International and Global Studies (INST) Program Assessment Report 2023-2024

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INST Program Goals and Learning Outcomes

The International and Global Studies (INST) program prepares our students for globally minded careers and helps them to become engaged global citizens. There are several student-centered goals for the program:

- 1. Global Focus.** We lead students to develop a broad understanding of the world and prepare them to think, read, and write critically about the interactions between nations, between non-state actors, and through explorations of local and regional issues with global scope.
- 2. Interdisciplinary Focus.** We are grounded in interdisciplinary teaching. Overall, we aim to teach students how different academic disciplines work together to study foreign affairs, changing networks in the neoliberal world order, global ecologies and economies, and the interactions of peoples across political boundaries.
- 3. Area Studies Focus.** Along with our three concentrations, students are encouraged to develop and deepen their knowledge of areas beyond the United States. We actively collaborate with Area Studies programs such as African and African American Studies (AAST), Asian Studies (AIST), Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS), and Middle East Studies (MEST) to highlight diverse offerings and co-host events and speakers with these programs.
- 4. Transcultural Focus.** We cultivate students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills to communicate, interact, and cooperate in meaningful ways with people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, faiths, linguistic groups, and nationalities. Overall, we foster an inclusive and ecumenical environment both inside and outside of the classroom.

INST students are expected to demonstrate competency in the following areas by the end of their course of study:

Outcome 1: Interdisciplinary Knowledge. Demonstrate broad, interdisciplinary understanding of international cultures, geographies, histories, politics, economics, and societies.

Outcome 2: Area Studies Knowledge. Develop deep understanding of a selected world region (i.e., Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or Middle East).

Outcome 3: Research Skills. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and to effectively analyze and research global issues.

Outcome 4: Communication Skills. Develop effective written and oral communications skills suitable for describing and interpreting aspects of global affairs and conveying them to both specialists and non-specialists.

Outcome 5: Language Competency. Become functionally competent in speaking, reading, and writing at least one modern world language other than English.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

INST uses a combination of direct and indirect methods, including tests, written and oral assignments, participation in professional development projects, and student surveys, to assess the above student learning outcomes. Below are examples of processes used to assess student competency:

The following methods are used to assess student learning objectives 1, 3, and 4 regarding interdisciplinary knowledge, research skills, and oral and written communication skills:

- INST 2813 Introduction to International and Global Studies
- INST 4003/INST 4003H Special Topics in International Studies
- INST 4913/INST 4913H International Studies Seminar
- Honors theses

The writing assignments and examinations allow us to assess our students' knowledge.

2. The following methods are used to assess student learning outcome 2 regarding knowledge of a world region:

- INST students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a major world region by completing 3-12 hours of approved courses in one of the Area Studies

programs housed in the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, including African and African American Studies (AAST), Asian Studies (AIST), Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS), and Middle East Studies (MEST). The specific number of courses needed to complete the major or minor varies depending on the under consideration.

3. The following methods are used to assess student learning objective 5 regarding language competency:

- **Advanced Language Courses**

All INST majors are required to complete at least six credit hours of language instruction in a world language at the 3000-level or higher. All students graduating with an INST major in 2023-2024 have fulfilled this requirement.

4. Experiential Learning (indirect measure for assessing learning objectives 1-5):

- *Study abroad*
- *Internships*
- *Undergraduate Research*
- *Service Learning and Volunteer Activities*

Analysis of Assessment Results:

All INST graduating seniors have completed the language as well as area studies requirements for the major or minor. A reasonable number of students have acquired experiential learning experience through study abroad, internships, or service-learning opportunities. Overall, the program has taught the knowledge, skills, and tools that students need to better understand today's dynamics international context for nations and their citizens.

While we are on target to achieve our main program goals, there is always areas for improvement. We intend to reconsider some of the course offerings for the individual tracks and presenting them in a more holistic fashion so students truly understand the importance of each. One aspect of this discussion includes the Area Studies interests with our INST students. While all INST students have gained some exposure to area studies during their course of study, we are continuing to see more student interests in European Studies and Latin American and Latino Studies. Students are less likely to be drawn to other world regions, such as Africa, the Middle East, or Asia. The fact that none of the students who have completed the exit survey indicates that they have taken courses in Asian Studies (AIST) to satisfy their area studies requirements is somewhat concerning. We have already started a conversation about revamping our curriculum, especially the concentration in the Global South.

As outlined in the 2022-2023 INST assessment report, the program has generally done well in providing our students with research opportunities, as indicated by the number of students completing a major research assignment or an Honor's thesis. We continue to strive to enhance student research experience by reintroducing an INST Undergraduate Research Workshop in Spring 2025.

Any changes to degree/certificate planned or made on the basis of the assessment and analysis:

- To further enhance student research experience, we will continue to hold the Undergraduate Research Workshop. We also have plans to invite students from other nearby campuses both in Arkansas and in the surrounding states to participate in the workshop. This should provide opportunities for students to network with their peers at other institutions and help to increase the visibility and impact of the workshop.
- The number of INST students participating in study abroad programs has remained relatively steady. However, we would like to see even more students studying abroad through either faculty-led programs or those organized by third parties. In Spring 2024, Dr. Hammond led a faculty-led study abroad program to Japan with Dr. Kim Sexton. Dr. Callabreta-Sajder also led a faculty-led study abroad program to Italy in Spring 2024. We would like to see this type of faculty engagement in study abroad continue.
- Dr. Calabretta-Sajder and Dr. Hammond intend on visiting a few sites for study abroad opportunities for our students in Spring 2025. Beyond this, we have been working with the Office of Study Abroad over the past year to create a list of curated programs to incentivize student participation in study abroad by pairing them with selected scholarship opportunities. We will continue to advertise these programs aggressively by holding regular information sessions about study abroad programs and widely distributing promotional materials. Overall, we have a very good working relationship with the Study Abroad office and maintain regular contact with them.
- Student participation in internship programs has been negatively impacted by the pandemic. INST assigned a faculty member to supervise internships prior to the pandemic, but this was no longer justified in view of the relative decline of internship participation. Currently we are considering compiling and distributing a list of internship programs for students to better identify potential internship programs. Hopefully, we will be able to return to having the need for an internship coordinator in the future.