

International and Global Studies (INST) Program Assessment Report

2024-2025

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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. At the major level, students study at least one language at the advanced level (two courses), guaranteeing linguistic mastery and intercultural competence. 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:

1. 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 (AAS), Asian Studies (AIST), Latin American and Latin 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. Thus, students demonstrate linguistic mastery and intercultural competence amongst at least two languages/cultures. All students graduating with an INST major in 2024-2025 have fulfilled this requirement.
4. Experiential Learning (indirect measure for assessing learning objectives 1-5):

- *Study abroad*
- *Internships* (11 students in INST participated in INST-credited internships in 2024-2025)
- *Undergraduate Research and thesis projects* (INST students defended 16 honors thesis in 2024-2025 with guidance from INST faculty)
- *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 and/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.

This semester, we restarted an exit survey for graduating students to get student feedback about the program. The survey was anonymous and had around twenty questions pertaining to levels of satisfaction with the program. There were thirteen responses to the survey. The Director and the Associate Director will use the data to adjust and improve the program. Some of the data suggests that there are some areas where we could collaborate more closely with other programs, like MEST, AIST, WLLC and the Honors College (more than half the respondents were Honors students). We also noticed a very high level of internship participation and would like to continue to expand internship opportunities for students. Finally, from the initial assessment of this data, we can see that several of our students continue onto law school, so it might be worth exploring more collaborative partnerships with the pre-law program and the Law School.

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. We plan to do this through:

- More active engagement with Area Studies programs, especially MEST and LALS (where the collaborative possibilities and interests of our students most closely align)
- Once we have permission from the College to make program changes, we will switch our concentration in "Global South" to a concentration in "Sustainability and Development" to more closely align with the needs of our students. A concentration in Sustainability and Development will also give us the chance to collaborate more closely across colleges—particularly with Walton and the Architecture School—since they both already have minors and/or programs covering these topics
- Although this year was difficult with Ryan on leave, we have had several productive conversations with Study Abroad providers about streamlining suggested study abroad options for each of our concentrations. We have also been in conversation with the Rome Center about planning out INST degree audits so that we can send students as a cohort to Rome to complete part of their INST degrees there (we offer the Global Studies Minor in Rome already, so the courses are available—we just need to get students and parents on board)
- With our new instructor starting in Fall 2025, we hope to create more stability and consistency in our course offerings
- We continue to strive to enhance student research experience by reintroducing the INST Undergraduate Research Workshop in Spring 2026.

- We recently inducted 5 new members into the Honors Society for International Studies (Sigma Iota Rho) bringing our total membership on campus up to around 16. In Fall 2025, we will start to organize more events and do more recruiting since so many of our students are eligible for membership. We would like to send a cohort of students to the annual conference in Indianapolis in 2026.

Any changes to degree/certificate planned or made based on 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. We are working with study abroad providers and with the Laurence Hare in the Office of Student Engagement to streamline our study abroad options and provide program-endorsed options for each of our three streams. We are also in conversation with the Rome Center (which already offers our minor) about sending more students from the INST program to Rome as a cohort on a yearly basis. These plans are in development.
- Dr. Calabretta-Sajder and Dr. Hammond intend on visiting a few sites for study abroad opportunities for our students in Spring 2026. 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. We have seen an uptick in internships, and were trying to identify new outlets for our students in the region, although many of the places where they could potentially intern have lost funding under the current administration.
- We are continuing to host student-facing activities and talks. This semester alone, we hosted two scholars and there were more than 40 students present at each event. We also hosted an jobs event with a global policy analyst from the Walmart Legal Department. Finally, we recently inducted five students into the Honors Society for International Studies (Sigma Iota Rho) and plan on organizing more activities around the honors society in the coming academic year. Overall, our goal is to provide helpful and engaging opportunities for our students to interact with other scholars and practitioners in the field of international and global studies in meaningful and productive ways.