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Introduction

The International Relations (IR) program explores how global, regional, and domestic factors influence relations between actors on the world stage. Students are equipped with both the foundational skills and specific knowledge necessary to analyze the choices and challenges that arise in this arena. IR majors pursue a course of study in world politics that includes classes in political science, economics, history, and languages, focusing on issues such as international security, international political economy, political and economic development, and democratization.

As an integral part of the major, all students are required to study overseas and obtain proficiency in a foreign language of their choice.

Many IR students pursue careers in government, non-governmental organizations, and business or go on to graduate school in law, business, economics, or political science.
Declaring Your International Relations Major

Students wishing to declare International Relations as a major, double major, or secondary major are encouraged to declare by the end of their sophomore year to ensure timely completion of the program.

To declare International Relations as your major, indicate on AXESS that you want to declare IR. You must also submit a course proposal to the IR Office. You may pick up a Major Proposal Form from the IR Program Office or complete one on the web. Use the IR Course Offering Lists from the website to indicate courses you have taken or plan to take to fulfill the major. Only include approved IR courses on your proposal, but you may petition courses in the future.

The Major Proposal consists of three pages. Page 1 - General biographic information and why you want to major in IR; Page 2 - Your IR Proposal Course List, Page 3 - Faculty Advisor Form.

Fill out your Major Proposal completely then turn it in to the IR Office. You must have a faculty advisor to declare. Attach the advisor form to your declaration packet (See ADVISING section for more information).
International Relations Major Requirements

Major = 70 units total

Core Courses (30 units)

- International Relations (5 units)
  - Political Science 101 * (pre- September 2015, POLISCI 101 was called POLISCI 1)

- Comparative Governance (5 units)
  Choose One:
  - Political Science 104 * (pre- September 2015, POLISCI 104 was called POLISCI 4)
  - History 102

- American Foreign Policy (5 units)
  Choose One:
  - International Relations 154, 168, 173, or 174,
  - Political Science 110C, 110D, 110G, or 214R

- Economics (5 units)
  Choose One:
  - ECON 1, 50, 51, or 52 (or former ECON 1A)

- One additional upper-division economics courses from the IR approved list of courses found on the website (5 units).

- Skills Class (5 units)
  Choose One:
  - Statistics 60
  - Economics 102A
**Specialization Courses** *(40 units)*
Select one Primary and one Secondary specialization from the list below:

*Primary Specialization:* 20-25 units  
*Secondary Specialization:* 15-20 units

1. Africa  
2. Comparative International Governance  
3. East and South Asia  
4. Economic Development/ World Economy  
5. Europe (East and West) & Russia  
6. Latin American and Iberian Studies  
7. Middle East and Central Asia  
8. International History and Culture  
9. International Security  
10. Social Development and Human Well-Being

**Other Requirements:**

- At least 1 course must be an upper division, seminar or colloquium.  
- At least one course must be designated by the IR Program as writing intensive (WiM).  
- Demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. Completing two years of University-level instruction (completion through 2\textsuperscript{nd} year, 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter) or passing a proficiency exam can fulfill this requirement. Foreign language units do not count toward the IR major. Advanced placement units do not fulfill the foreign language requirement.  
- Complete a quarter (10+ weeks) of academic study overseas through the Stanford Overseas Studies Program or a pre-approved non-Stanford program; non-Stanford programs must be pre-approved by the IR Director before the student enrolls in the program.
Additional Policies:

✦ All courses counting toward the major must be taken for a LETTER GRADE and receive a “C” or better (with the exception of Foreign language courses used to satisfy the 2-year language requirement, which may be taken for C/NC). Transfer courses from universities outside Stanford must receive a B- or better to count toward the major.
✦ A maximum of 5 units of Directed Reading can be counted towards your IR major requirements.
✦ Up to three non-Stanford courses, for a maximum of 15 units, may be counted toward the IR major. A minimum grade of B- is required for transfer credit. Petitions for transfer credit must be submitted to the IR office. Courses must have received transfer credit units from the Registrar.
✦ Course substitutions from the IR approved course offerings may be made during progress of the major. All other changes must be petitioned.
✦ If double majoring, you cannot count any of the courses used to fulfill the requirements for the second major toward the IR major.
Directed Reading (INTNLREL 197)

Students may sign up for a directed reading project if you find a topic not taught through traditional courses at Stanford or if you wish to pursue a topic in more depth.

To begin a Directed Reading, print the Directed Reading Proposal from the Academic Forms page of the IR website. Make sure to fill out the information completely, including a description of your project and who will serve as your faculty instructor.

When approaching a faculty member, please make sure that your proposal is well thought out, and that your topic is not something covered by an existing course. Faculty members are more inclined to accept supervising your directed reading project if your proposal is complete.

Please discuss with your faculty advisor what their expectations are from you when conducting your directed reading project. There are no hard or fast rules. It is up to the individual faculty member to set the expectations for the project. Most faculty members ask their students to meet with them about once a week and to write a final paper.

Make sure to get the signature of your faculty supervisor on the Directed Reading form, and return it to the IR Program Office. After approval is granted you must search for your faculty section on AXESS and register appropriately. Failure to submit the proposal on time may prohibit you from counting this course toward your IR major.

Directed Reading must be taken for 1-5 units in order to receive credit towards your IR major requirements. A maximum of five units can be used towards your IR major requirements.
Petitions

Courses relevant to your course of study that are not already approved may be petitioned during the progress of the major by submitting a petition form to the IR Program Office. The following are some examples of when a Petition is necessary:

• Relevant Stanford courses that are not already approved for the IR major.
• Petitioning to count a non-Stanford course towards IR degree requirements (please also see the Transfer Credit section below).
• Petitioning to count a non-Stanford overseas program.

Petition forms are available in the Academic Forms section of the IR website. Please make sure to fill out the petition completely and in as much detail as possible. Attach the syllabus. An email will be sent to you regarding the status of your petition.

Transfer Credit

Credit for courses taken at other universities and applied towards the IR major must first be approved for general University credit by the Registrar’s Transfer Credit Evaluation Office. After University approval is granted, you can petition for transfer credit approval toward your major requirements (up to 15 quarter units).

When petitioning for approval, please make sure to include as much information as possible about the course, such as a syllabus, course description, or papers written. Attach documentation of approval from the transfer credit office, including parallel course or non-parallel course information.
Rules and conditions for approval of transfer credit are listed under the Transfer Credit section in the Stanford University Bulletin or refer to this website: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/transfer-credit

Language Requirement

As part of the IR Major Requirements, you are required to complete at least the equivalent of two-years of college-level study in a foreign language. You can accomplish this by either completing two years of University level instruction (2nd year, 3rd quarter), or by passing a proficiency exam conducted by the Language Center. Please consult the Language Center for details regarding proficiency exams.

Foreign language units do not count towards your IR major unit requirement (70 units). You can use your language courses toward a minor or double major in another program.
Faculty Advising

As an International Relations major, you are required to obtain a faculty advisor. Faculty advisors represent an invaluable source of knowledge for you. Faculty advisors can help you plan your program, advise on possible graduate schools and programs, and can possibly write a letter of recommendation. It is your responsibility to contact potential advisors. If you know of a faculty member who you would like to have as an advisor, please contact them directly to discuss the possibility of being their advisee.

Consult the Advisor List available in the IR Program Office or on the web for information on participating IR faculty, their departments and research interests. As you read over the list of professors, take note of those from whom you have taken a class or plan to take a class. Look for common research interests, particularly if you plan to complete an honors thesis. Contact the professor during office hours to introduce yourself, discuss your plans at Stanford and beyond, and ask if s/he will serve as your IR advisor. Feel free to meet with different professors before you decide on who will work best for you.

The advisor list is not comprehensive nor are you restricted to picking an advisor from this list alone; you may find a faculty member who better suits your needs from other sources. You are required to have an advisor before declaring the IR major.
Honors Program

The International Relations honors program offers qualified students the opportunity to conduct a major independent research project under faculty guidance. Such a project requires a high degree of initiative and dedication, significant amounts of time and energy, and demonstrated skills in research and writing.

IR Honors Track
The IR Honors Track is the traditional IR Honors pathway. The program is interdisciplinary and enables students to undertake a wide variety of research projects. Previously, students have written theses on topics such as international political economy, international security, regional integration, human rights, domestic issues in foreign countries, international education and regional issues (this list is by no means exhaustive). Students can select to work with faculty throughout the university, and will be equipped with the professional “tools” to undertake their own independent research, analyze the findings, and write a final research thesis.

Below are recommended timelines, and policy issues to help you begin your honors thesis work.

Prerequisites:
• Declared IR major
• Minimum 3.5 overall grade point average
• Good Academic Standing
• Successful experience writing a research paper
• A faculty advisor approved honors thesis proposal and approval from the IR Program

For further information and policies, see the IR Honors Handbook.
Recommended Timeline

JUNIOR YEAR

• Enroll in a course dealing with the subject you wish to pursue in your honors work. Take a writing seminar to help develop research and writing skills.
• Define a viable thesis topic and consult with possible faculty members who can serve as your thesis advisor. Before the end of the academic year, develop a work plan with your advisor.
• Contact VPUE during the beginning of Winter Quarter if you wish to apply for a grant to conduct research during the summer.
• Attend the IR Honors information meeting in late February/early March.
• Submit your IR Honors Thesis Proposal application by the deadline (date TBA on the IR website- typically early March).
• Once accepted in the IR Honors program, enroll in INTNLREL 200A (IR Honors Field Research) in the spring quarter of your junior year.

Summer

• Sharpen your proposal and start your research. The more research you do over the summer, the more you can concentrate on writing once you get back to campus.
• Consider attending Bing Honors College, which gives honors students the opportunity to focus on their theses as well as work with faculty advisors for three weeks in September before the start of senior year.
SENIOR YEAR

Autumn Quarter
- Enroll in INTNLREL 200B (International Relations Honors Seminar), which will focus on the analysis of research findings and initial steps in writing the thesis. At the end of the quarter, students should expect to have 1-2 chapters of their thesis submitted in draft form.
- Enroll in INTNLREL 198 (IR Honors Thesis) with your Thesis Advisor. You should enroll in no more than 5 thesis related units per quarter.
- Establish timeline for draft completion and/or progress check-points in consultation with your advisor.

Winter Quarter
- Enroll in INTNLREL 200C (IR Honors Thesis Writing) in the spring quarter.
- Enroll in INTNLREL 198 (IR Honors Thesis) with your Thesis Advisor for 2-5 units. Continue to meet with your Faculty Advisor as agreed.

Spring Quarter
- Enroll in INTNLREL 198 (IR Honors Thesis) with your Thesis Advisor for 2-5 units. You should plan to submit a first draft of your complete thesis by the third week of the quarter so that comments and revisions can be made. The draft should be submitted to your secondary advisor if you have one.
- Make your honors thesis presentation and attend the IR Honors Conference (in May).
- Submit one copy of your thesis to your advisor, one bound copy and one digital PDF to the IR Program Office, and upload a digital copy to the Library repository by the announced due date. If you want to
be considered for a thesis award, you should submit your completed thesis to both the IR office and your advisor in advance. Due dates to be announced (usually mid-May to be considered for awards and early June for the final deadline).

For further information on IR Honors, consult the IR Honors Handbook found on the IR website.
Research Grants

Undergraduate Advising and Research (UAR) provides two types of research grants for undergraduate honors students. Major grants provide roughly up to $6,000 for research related expenses and are awarded once a year. Quarterly grants provide up to $1,500 and are awarded three times a year.

The application process for these grants is very competitive. You should have a faculty letter of sponsorship, and in your application you should explain:

- the objective of your project
- the significance of your research
- project methodology: how you intend to complete the project
- preparation: previous coursework and other research experience
- resources: your faculty mentor and other support
- budget

For further application information, please consult the UAR website at: https://undergrad.stanford.edu/opportunities/research/get-funded/apply-uar-student-grants

Major grants enable you to conduct field research during the summer between junior and senior year. To take advantage of this opportunity, submit your proposal by the deadline in your Junior year (check the UAR website for deadlines).

Small grants are awarded throughout the year. For exact deadlines and further information, check the URP web site: https://undergrad.stanford.edu/opportunities/research/get-funded/apply-student-grants/grant-types
International Relations Awards

The International Relations Program presents the IR Departmental Honors Award to one or two senior IR student(s) whose honors thesis represent a comprehensive work of outstanding merit. Winners receive recognition during the departmental commencement ceremony and a cash award of $300.00.

University Awards

The University and the IR Program recognizes those students who rank among the top 15 percent within the graduating class as a whole as graduating with Distinction. A notation “with Distinction” is inscribed on the diploma and noted in the commencement bulletin. If you miss the deadline for filing your A.B. application, you will not be considered for distinction.

Students eligible for Phi Beta Kappa must achieve academic distinction in the major as well as in courses across a broad range of fields. The selection committee will look for achievement beyond the beginning level in areas outside the major. If you miss the deadline for filing your A.B. application, you will not be considered for Phi Beta Kappa.

The University Firestone Medal is an award presented to students in recognition of the completion of an outstanding thesis. The International Relations Program may nominate one or two students whose honors papers are recognized as truly outstanding. Medals are awarded by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences, and winners receive a cash award.
Double and Secondary Majors

**Please note that even a double or secondary major in IR must be declared by the junior year.**

**Double Major**
Although most students declare only one major, a student may formally declare more than one major within a single baccalaureate (A.B. or B.S.) program. The student may do this either at the time of initial Major declaration, or by adding another major at a later date. Students should meet with advisors from each program to discuss multiple major options.

Both departments/programs will have access to all information pertinent to the student’s academic record, and students are expected to have an advisor for both majors. Both majors will be reflected on the diploma and transcript.

When declaring double majors, students must make sure not to duplicate courses. To ensure that courses do not overlap, the IR Program (and the University) require that you complete a Multiple Major-Minor Course Approval Form indicating which courses you plan to apply toward each major. This must be filled out and approved by each major department/program. The form is available at: https://stanford.app.box.com/v/majmin-multmaj

**Secondary Major**
The difference between a Double Major and Secondary Major is the ability to duplicate courses. If pursuing a Secondary Major, you can duplicate courses for each major. The Secondary Major will appear on your transcript (with SEC as a notation), but not on your diploma.
International Relations Minor

Declaring Your IR Minor

The International Relations minor is intended to provide an interdisciplinary background allowing a deeper understanding of contemporary international issues.

To declare your minor in International Relations reference the updated Course Offering lists from the International Relations website. Once you have declared your minor through AXESS, you will also need to complete the “IR Minor Declaration Form” form found on the IR webpage under the Academic Forms page. This form must be submitted and approved before your declaration can be approved in AXESS. You will receive an email with the status of your declaration.

When you apply to graduate, the IR Program (and the University) requires that you complete a Multiple Major-Minor Course Approval Form to ensure that courses applied towards your major and towards your minor do not overlap. Please indicate which courses you have applied toward your major and IR minor. This form must be approved by each major/minor department/program. The form is available at: https://stanford.app.box.com/v/majmin-multmaj

Minor Requirements

35 units of unduplicated course work:
1. Political Science 101 (pre- September 2015, POLISCI 101 was called POLISCI 1).
2. One of the following courses for American Foreign Policy requirement:
- International Relations 154, 168, 173, or 174,
- Political Science 110C, 110D, 110G, or 214R

3. Five courses for 5 units each from one of the ten IR Specializations (specializations are listed on page 5 under the Major section).

You may not use AP units or transfer credit for the minor. All courses for the IR minor must be taken for a letter grade and you must earn a grade of “C” or better. See the IR Course Offerings on the IR website for approved IR courses. Please note that you cannot duplicate units when pursuing a minor.
Planning For Graduate School

Many IR majors go on to graduate and professional schools. Your main resource of information about these opportunities should be faculty and the Office of Undergraduate Advising and Research (for pre-Law and pre-Business advising). The UAR website is: https://undergrad.stanford.edu/

The following is general advice.

Graduate School

Choice of an appropriate graduate school is an important decision. There are many questions you should ask about each school you are considering, such as its admissions criteria, curriculum, tuition costs, and reputation in the job market. Many schools send representatives to the Career Development Center each year to talk with interested students. This is an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about the schools. Furthermore, faculty members and your advisor will usually have definite ideas about which institutions are outstanding in their own fields of interest and will be happy to discuss the pros and cons of the schools you are considering. It is also useful to visit schools, attend classes, and meet some of the faculty in the areas of your interest.

Preparing for Business School

If you are interested in pursuing a Master’s of Business Administration, you should consult the guide to Graduate Management Education, published by the Graduate Management Admission Council. There is no such thing as a pre-business education. A liberal education with emphasis on the ability to express oneself and on an exposure to a wide range of disciplines is generally recommended. We suggest that you take courses in calculus, economics, computer science, statistics, and English (to improve
writing ability). Significant work experience and achievement are also important considerations in evaluating an application for admission. Most schools prefer full time work experience; therefore you might want to wait to apply until after you have worked for a few years. The GMAT is offered four times a year and is required for admission to most graduate business schools. Check with prospective schools for their application deadlines - these tend to vary.

Preparing for Law School

If you are interested in pursuing a law degree, you should consult the Pre-professional Handbook for Law as well as the Prelaw Handbook published by the Association of American Law Schools and the Law School Admissions Council. Law schools do not suggest that students major in any particular discipline, but a pre-law student might want to be familiar with a number of areas before applying, such as western culture (history, political science, sociology, philosophy), statistics, computer science, accounting and English. Most law schools discourage students from taking too many law classes as undergraduates. All accredited law schools in the US require taking the LSAT (Law School Admission Test). Check with prospective schools for their application deadlines.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

If you are interested in applying to any other graduate programs, you should take the GRE no later than October of your senior year.

Letters of Recommendation

By the end of your sophomore year you should begin to think about letters of recommendation. One of the best ways to get to know professors is by working with them on an Honors Thesis project or an Independent
Research project. Please keep in mind that it is in your interest to request letters from faculty who know you well and can comment specifically on your academic abilities.

The number and types of recommendations required varies with each university. Each school has its own specific recommendation form. You can contact the CDC (Career Development Center) and ask to open up a file with the Candidates Records Department. In doing this, the CDC acts as a depository for letters of recommendation so that your references will not have to fill out a form for each school you are sending an application to. For more information, attend one of the informational meetings held by the CDC.
Career Opportunities

Career opportunities are numerous. We have found that students who have diversified their programs and have taken some skills courses (economics, statistics, accounting, and computer science) have found a more receptive job market. Also students who are proficient in languages and who have studied and lived abroad, and those with extra-curricular activities and work experience demonstrating leadership and initiative, have been more successful in the job market. Information on various career opportunities can be found at the BEAM office. Furthermore, the Stanford Alumni Association has an Alumni Contact Service that can put you in touch with alumni in various fields who have agreed to talk about their careers with undergraduates. Also, make sure to talk with your advisors about career choices - they are a valuable source of information.
Frequently Asked Questions

How do I fulfill the IR econ requirement if I’m doing an Economics double major or minor?
The IR and Econ Departments will “double count” the lower division Econ skills classes (ie- ECON 1 (formerly ECON 1A and 1B)) towards both the IR and Econ majors. However, you still MUST take one additional upper-division IR economics courses to fulfill the IR major requirement (this cannot be double-counted).

If I’m doing another major that requires statistics, do I need to take another stats course for the IR Major?
IR will “double count” the lower division Skills Class (STATS 60 or ECON 102A). However, you MUST check with your other major department to see if they will also “double-count”.

How do I fulfill the language requirement?
a) Complete the 2nd year, 3rd quarter class in the language of your choice. OR
b) Pass a proficiency exam with the Language Center.

Can the language requirement be waived?
Yes, if English is your second language. You must submit an official letter to the IR Office detailing that English is your second language, which language is your first, and where you lived outside of the U.S. and for how long.

Do I have to take language courses for a letter grade?
Courses used to fulfill the 2 year foreign language requirement for IR may be taken for Credit/No Credit. However, please note that if you plan to also major or minor in your foreign language, that Language Center may
require you to complete these courses for an actual letter grade. Refer to the Language Center for further guidance.

**Can the overseas requirement be waived?**
Yes, if you are a foreign student who has been raised abroad through High School. You must submit an official letter to the IR Office detailing where you lived outside of the U.S. and at what age was your last year of schooling while living abroad.

**When should I go overseas?**
You should try to go overseas during your sophomore or junior year. It is not advisable to go overseas during your senior year, especially if you are writing an honors thesis.

**Can I go abroad with a non-Stanford overseas program to fulfill the overseas studies requirement?**
Non-Stanford programs MUST be pre-approved by the IR office before a student enrolls in the program. Please keep in mind that you can have an overseas program approved, but then not have the course credit approved. Upon your return, you will need to provide us with a transcript for verification of program participation as well as the annotated transcript reviewed by BOSP and the Registrar’s office. If you are pursuing course credit, submit an IR Petition form found on the website along with a copy of the syllabus for each course.

**How do I transfer credit from another university or another overseas program?**
See the Transfer Credit Office or refer to this website: [http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/transfer-credit](http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/transfer-credit)
After you receive the credit, you should turn in the IR Petition form with documentation to the IR Office for possible major approval.
What if I took an un-approved Stanford course that I want to count toward my major?
Fill out an IR course petition form found on the Academic Forms page of the IR website and include a syllabus and your transcript.

May I take sign language at Stanford to satisfy the 2 year foreign language requirement?
No. Currently Stanford only offers American Sigh Language (ASL), which is not considered a foreign language. ASL will not satisfy the IR major requirement of 2 years of foreign language proficiency.

How do I find an advisor?
Check out the Advisor List from the IR Program Office or on the IR website. Make an appointment or drop in during office hours with a faculty member to discuss the IR major and being your IR advisor.

What do IR students pursue after graduating from Stanford?
Many IR students pursue careers in government, non-governmental organizations, and business or go on to graduate school in law, business, economics, or political science. Connect with IR on LinkedIn to network with former and current students.

Does IR offer funding for research opportunities?
IR does not offer direct funding for student research at this time. Please see the UAR and SGS websites for university funding and grant opportunities.
Contacts

IR Program Director
Professor Michael Tomz
Department of Political Science

IR Program Office

intlrelations@stanford.edu
650.725.0715

www.internationalrelations.stanford.edu