

ASSESSMENT REPORT, 2008

B.A. IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Introduction

The Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs (IA) is an interdisciplinary program, housed in the Department of Political Science and drawing upon the fields of Anthropology, Geography, History, and Political Science in order to best equip students to excel in an increasingly globalized world following graduation. The IA Program also places an emphasis on the study of foreign language, requiring 21 credit hours of a single language with the ultimate goal of student fluency upon graduation.

The IA Program addresses the Marshall University goals of:

- Preparing [students] for responsible participation as members of local, regional, national, and international communities.
- Cultivating...those qualities as needed by an educated citizenry to meet the challenges of societal living.

The IA Program is currently home to 62 majors (a 21% increase since 2006) and 23 minors. The average GPA for International Affairs majors is 3.21, and the median GPA is 3.34.

Present Evaluation

The International Affairs Program is currently in a period of transition. Dr. Jason Morrissette (Political Science) took over as Program Director in Fall 2008, and plans are underway to overhaul both the program's curriculum, as well as its ongoing assessment regimen.

Upcoming curriculum changes include a re-evaluation of the required courses to ensure that the program is best meeting the needs of its students. Furthermore, consideration is being given to launching a 100-level "Introduction to International Affairs" course (currently, the program operates without a true "entry-point" course), as well as an International Affairs Capstone (students currently choose between Political Science, Economics, and History capstones). Finally, work is underway to extend the interdisciplinary nature of the program, incorporating additional courses from Anthropology and History into the curriculum.

Student Learning Objectives, Assessment Measures

Upon completion of various courses within the major, students should be able to...

- Define/critique the process of globalization and identify emerging challenges of a global nature.
- Compare and contrast political, economic, and cultural institutions across states, nations, peoples, ethnic groups, and other social groupings.
- Apply knowledge of political, economic, and cultural institutions across state borders to identify and predict emerging international trends.
- Demonstrate proper social scientific research skills, generating research questions and testing hypotheses.
- Describe how historical, economic, political, social, and spatial relationships develop, persist, and change.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language.

Assessment measures, benchmarks, and timetables for each of these learning objectives will be discussed below.

Student Learning Objective 1

Define/critique the process of globalization and identify emerging challenges of a global nature.

Measure: Essay question administered in PSC 209 (Fundamentals of International Relations) addressing globalization and emerging global trends and challenges.

Benchmarks:

- 1/4 Student fails to demonstrate an understanding of globalization
- 2/4 Student shows some understanding of globalization, but fails to offer substantive critiques or identify challenges
- 3/4 Student demonstrates an understanding of globalization, critique is underdeveloped or superficial
- 4/4 Student demonstrates an understanding of globalization and effectively assesses both its positive and negative impacts.

Timetable: Administered Fall 2009.

Student Learning Objective 2

Compare and contrast political, economic, and cultural institutions across states, nations, peoples, ethnic groups, and other social groupings.

Measure: Essay question administered in PSC 207 (Fundamentals of Comparative Politics) addressing comparison between two or more countries.

Benchmarks:

- 1/4 Student fails to demonstrate the ability to apply the comparative method.
- 2/4 Student shows some understanding of the comparative method, but points of comparison are superficial or contain factual errors.
- 3/4 Student demonstrates a solid understanding of the comparative method, identifying substantive similarities and differences between cases.
- 4/4 Student demonstrates an excellent understanding of the comparative method and offers compelling explanations for differences or similarities observed

Timetable: Administered Spring 2010.

Student Learning Objective 3

Apply knowledge of political, economic, and cultural institutions across state borders to identify and predict emerging international trends.

Measure: Essay question administered in PSC 405 (International Organization) concerning the development of international institutions and how they impact global politics.

Benchmarks:

- 1/4 Student fails to demonstrate a significant knowledge of international institutions.
- 2/4 Student demonstrates awareness/understanding of international institutions, but fails to comprehend their significance to international politics.
- 3/4 Student demonstrates a thorough understanding of international institutions, and offers solid analysis of their impact on international politics.
- 4/4 Student demonstrates an excellent understanding of international institutions, their Origins, their significance, and their shortcomings.

Timetable: Administered Fall 2009.

Student Learning Objective 4

Demonstrate proper social scientific research skills, generating research questions and testing hypotheses.

Measure: Completion of an original research paper in PSC 406 (International Politics), drawing upon proper social scientific research skills.

Benchmarks:

- 1/4 Student's research is unoriginal, offers little or no insight, and contains factual errors.
- 2/4 Student's research offers some insight into the phenomena under consideration, but fails to properly demonstrate social scientific methodology in its execution.
- 3/4 Student's research offers valuable insights into the phenomena under consideration and demonstrates a basic understanding of social scientific methods.
- 4/4 Student's research is original, creative, and offers valuable insight into the phenomena under consideration—all while expertly applying social scientific research methods.

Timetable: Administered Spring 2010.

Student Learning Objective 5

Describe how historical, economic, political, social, and spatial relationships develop, persist, and change.

Measure: Essay question administered in PSC 423 (American Foreign Policy) concerning the evolution of American Foreign Policy with regards to various regions of the world.

Benchmarks:

- 1/4 Student demonstrates little or no knowledge of the evolution of US Foreign Policy
- 2/4 Student demonstrates some understanding of US Foreign Policy, but fails to place it in a relevant historical context.
- 3/4 Student demonstrates a solid knowledge of the evolution of US Foreign Policy, identifying key historical junctures in its development.
- 4/4 Student demonstrates an excellent understanding of the evolution of US Foreign Policy, key historical junctures, and effectively critiques these developments.

Timetable: Administered Spring 2011.

Student Learning Objective 6

Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language.

Measure: Currently undetermined. Requires input from Modern Languages department on what kinds of fluency tests are current administered to students.

Benchmarks: TBA

Timetable: TBA

Conclusion

Chief among the IA Program's current goals is developing a more consistent, more effective assessment mechanism. The measures and benchmarks presented above represent an initial effort in that direction. They are, of course, subject to change pending curriculum changes or further reflection.

Respectfully submitted,

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