The University of Chicago has a long and distinguished history in the interdisciplinary study of international affairs. The international studies major was founded to bring together the College's commitment to exemplary undergraduate education with students who are interested in preparing for academic, government, nonprofit, or business careers with an international focus, and who also value the benefits of cross-cultural learning. International studies students are encouraged to understand the operation of social, cultural, economic, and political systems and to question their very formation.

Thoughtful engagement with diverse modes of understanding is a cornerstone of international studies—one of UChicago's most popular majors.

**Faculty**
The University of Chicago has a long-standing commitment to interdisciplinary international studies. The faculty has included many founders of the international studies field, among them Hannah Arendt, Hans Morgenthau, Morton Kaplan, and Quincy Wright.

Current faculty members draw upon a wide variety of disciplines in both the social sciences and humanities to build on
recent papers are:

- “The Age of Detention: U.S. Nativism and De Facto Immigrant Criminalization in the 1990s”
- “Lessons from the Land of the Thunder Dragon: The Creation of a Medical Modernity in Bhutan”
- “Creating European Bodies: Organ Transplants, Identity, and the European Union”

Students must also achieve proficiency in an additional language. Language acquisition and Study Abroad are integral parts of the international studies curriculum. These requirements are based on the belief that communicative proficiency in languages and focused, unsheltered international experiences are vital for understanding diverse civilizations and regions.

Course work is supplemented by opportunities to participate in a variety of related student organizations, such as Model United Nations, Amnesty International, and the Student Committee on the Middle East. Internships are another way to gain experience and make contacts, and both Career Advising and Planning Services and the Human Rights Program help students identify placements and prepare applications.

Curriculum

The goal of the international studies major is to encourage undergraduate study in many areas of international relevance, including human rights, international security, globalization, and regional/interregional studies. Students must complete a two-quarter introductory sequence, Contemporary Global Issues, and a course distribution requirement to ensure that their international studies curriculum has breadth and depth.

International studies majors take classes from a number of disciplines that are organized into three subfields of study:
- International political economy
- Transnational processes
- Area and civilization

Contrasting perspectives among these subfields are presented in the two-quarter introductory core course. The first part of this course surveys international, social, political, and cultural patterns in the context of global interactions. The second part of the course examines a select set of global issues in depth: nationalism, transnational identities generated by migration and refugee flows, global environmental movements, human rights, cyberspace, and international conflicts.

Students prepare a BA thesis under the supervision of a faculty adviser and an international studies preceptor. Examples of recent papers are:

- “The Age of Detention: U.S. Nativism and De Facto Immigrant Criminalization in the 1990s”
- “Lessons from the Land of the Thunder Dragon: The Creation of a Medical Modernity in Bhutan”
- “Creating European Bodies: Organ Transplants, Identity, and the European Union”

Students must also achieve proficiency in an additional language. Language acquisition and Study Abroad are integral parts of the international studies curriculum. These requirements are based on the belief that communicative proficiency in languages and focused, unsheltered international experiences are vital for understanding diverse civilizations and regions.

Course work is supplemented by opportunities to participate in a variety of related student organizations, such as Model United Nations, Amnesty International, and the Student Committee on the Middle East. Internships are another way to gain experience and make contacts, and both Career Advising and Planning Services and the Human Rights Program help students identify placements and prepare applications.

Study Abroad

Through programs in Africa, Asia, Europe, Canada, and Latin America, international studies majors can strengthen language skills in addition to learning about the political and economic systems of another nation. Through the Human Rights Program, students can intern in countries around the world. Previous interns have conducted research projects on health care in El Salvador and the state of media freedom and safety for journalists in South Asia. Others have assisted in planning humanitarian relief efforts in Thailand or promoted national peace and unity in the Seychelles.

International studies majors frequently win awards, grants, and fellowships. Support is available through programs that include the Foreign Language Acquisition Grants ($2,000 stipends in support of summer language study abroad) and the F. Champion Ward Third Year International Travel Grants ($3,000 grants for summer honors thesis research abroad). Many international studies majors also choose to study abroad through the University’s partnerships with foreign schools, including the London School of Economics and Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris.

Joint Degree Program

Qualified UChicago students may pursue graduate study in Middle Eastern studies, Latin American and Caribbean studies, and international relations while also completing their undergraduate work. A special strength of these master’s degree programs is their interdisciplinary approach to a wide range of questions relating to international issues.

Faculty members’ expertise extends over a broad range of subjects, including international relations theory, security studies, international political economy, international history, history and conduct of U.S. foreign policy, human rights, and international law and organization.

After Graduation

Students who graduate with a degree in international studies are well prepared for a variety of different careers. Many international studies graduates take part in Teach for America or the Peace Corps, or complete research abroad with Fulbright Fellowships. Graduates likewise serve at the highest levels in government, provide leadership in some of the world’s largest and most influential international organizations, and contribute to many respected journals and media outlets.