

International Studies Major Guidelines for the Senior Project Proposal

INTL 488 (1 credit) and INTL 489 (2 credits)

The Senior Project for International Studies is meant to integrate your study abroad experience and the academic work you have done in your primary major. It is therefore desirable that you develop the idea for the project before you embark on study abroad. The project should incorporate some aspect of your stay abroad with an issue or problem in your primary field of study which you wish to investigate in detail, such that while you are abroad you are doing research, gathering information, taking specific courses, or perhaps conducting interviews or acquiring materials which you can then use in writing the project when you return. The purpose of the Proposal is to determine what you will need to focus on during the semester in another country.

Much more than a term paper, the Senior Project requires a substantial independent effort to broaden your understanding of a certain issue or problem or phenomenon across cultures and borders. The goal is to prove to yourself and to potential employers or graduate and professional programs that you have the background and skills to identify an interesting question with international implications, to do the necessary ground work, and, finally, to produce a solid written work which demonstrates your cross-cultural understanding of the issue as well as your analytical, critical thinking and writing skills. The goal is to produce a written work of professional quality. As a rule, projects run to 25 or more pages and include a substantial bibliography that reflects a variety of sources. They should conform to the format and style requirements appropriate for your primary field (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc).

International Studies Major Director

Jeanne Hageman serves as the Director of the International Studies Major. She can provide basic information and direction for those beginning their proposal. The Director is not meant to serve as the main adviser for your project—that needs to be someone in the field in which you are working. Dr. Hageman and you will work to select a suitable advisor in your field.

Individual Advisers:

For your Proposal and Project you need to choose an adviser in your discipline who is sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject you intend to explore and who is willing to work closely with you. This may be an instructor whose classes you particularly valued or whose expertise is especially appropriate to your proposed subject. The ISM Director and your College adviser will be able to help you make that choice and perhaps the initial contact.

Choosing a topic:

As you do your course work in your major and perhaps in foreign language you will no doubt be struck by certain cultural differences or surprised by similarities you had not previously considered. These impressions can often be the basis for an interesting project proposal. It is important to choose a topic that truly interests you rather than to accept someone else's enthusiasm for a subject that becomes simply an "assignment." Once you identify a general area that intrigues you, discuss it with a faculty member or the College Adviser, especially to determine **how it will fulfill the requirement to integrate your major and the study abroad experience.**

Enrolling in INTL 488:

After you have determined that your idea is feasible, you should seek specific permission from the faculty member to enroll under his/her direction in the 1 credit Proposal course (INTL 488). You will need to see Dr. Hageman before you attempt to enroll - INTL 488 is by permit only.

Writing the Proposal:

The proposal is essentially a concise narrative summary (generally 3 pages) of what you intend to accomplish, how you will carry out the work (your approach, method, type of analysis, etc.), and a brief review of the resources you have already consulted, plus a preliminary list of those you will need to consult. The proposal should clearly indicate the following:

1. **Purpose.** What overall goal or hypothesis will shape the project? Be explicit about your central idea. What significant questions will you address in the project? At this point, what answers do you anticipate? In what ways is the central idea of the project interesting / useful? How does it integrate your study abroad with your major field?

2. **Methodology.** Explain how you will go about addressing the questions surrounding your central idea. What will your scholarship consist of? For example, what types of materials will you examine or what kind of research will you conduct; will you analyze primary texts; do you need to conduct interviews while studying abroad or collect certain materials? What background must you acquire/establish before you can proceed to offer your own analysis and conclusions?

3. **Resources / Documentation.** In the last section of the proposal list describe in a few paragraphs which works you have already consulted and how they might be useful to your overall plan. This should amount to 10+ sources already consulted; more than 75% of these should be in edited or refereed publications, whether print or on-line. Finally, add a bibliography of at least 10 more sources that you intend to consult.

4. **Deadlines:** It is very important for you and your adviser to agree on a timetable for completion of the project. Attached to the final draft of the proposal should be a very brief indication of the main deadlines you envision, including 1) the dates of your study abroad; 2) when you will submit a substantial rough draft; 3) when you will submit a final draft; and 4) the probable date of your graduation.

The completed proposal must be submitted to your adviser no later than December 1st or April 1st of the semester of your enrollment in INTL 488. The proposal will be evaluated and graded on the quality and substance of sections 1-3 as described above.

Enrolling in INTL 489:

Upon successful completion of INTL 488 and the study/work/internship/research abroad experience, you will be allowed to enroll in INTL 489, which is a 2-credit class that involves the actual writing of the thesis. You will work closely with Dr. Hageman and your faculty advisor on this project. The final paper should be a complete project without typographical errors, ready to be presented to a future employer, graduate school entrance committee, etc.