Political Science & International Affairs Student Handbook

(Revised 11/24)

Welcome to the Department of Political Science & International Affairs! This handbook is designed to answer questions you may have about the Department, its faculty, major and minor programs, student opportunities, and our alumni. See below for relevant links, and read on for specific content.

PSCI Department Page (Link)
PSCI Linkedin Page (Link)
PSCI Facebook Group (Link)
PSCI Department Instagram (Link)
PSCI Department Newsletter (Link)
PSCI Department Honor Code (Link)

University-wide Internship and Career-related info:	UMW Handshake (Link)
University-wide student and alumni networking platform:	Network MaryWash (Link)

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Understanding Your UMW Degree

Big Picture

Every UMW student's degree is made up of 3 categories of courses:

1. Courses required for the major
2. General education requirements, and
3. Electives

Each category makes up approximately 1/3 of the required credits for the degree. The general education requirements can look confusing, but you'll likely satisfy several requirements by taking courses for your major and interests. Each of the general education requirements can be satisfied with courses from many different disciplines so you can create a course plan that fits with your goals and interests. Your major advisors will work with you to select just the right set of courses for you.

Major and Minor Requirements

You can find the all UMW degree program requirements in the UMW Academic Catalog: https://catalog.umw.edu/

Select "Undergraduate" then "Majors" (or "Minors") and then the program of interest.

The Department awards two degrees: Political Science and International Affairs. The Department also supports a minor in Security and Conflict Studies. These courses of study provide students with practical knowledge of the field and prepare them for multiple career paths in public and governmental service, law, graduate school, and the private sector.

The Political Science Major Requirements lists everything you will need to do to complete the major requirements. Since all upper-level courses require both *PSCI 101 Intro to Political Science* and *PSCI 102 Intro to International Relations*, it is recommended you complete both in your first year.

The International Affairs Major Requirements lays out all the requirements to complete the major. Like Political Science, all upper-level courses will have *PSCI, 101 Intro to Political Science* and *PSCI 102 Intro to International Relations* as prerequisites, so it is recommended you complete both in your first year. International Affairs is an interdisciplinary major, which means that you will take courses in other disciplines, including Economics, History, and Geography. The International Affairs Major also requires students to reach the "Intermediate" 202 level in one language. Since students

start at different levels of language proficiency, it is up to students and their Major Advisor to determine when to take these courses.

The Security and Conflict Studies Minor Requirements lists all necessary information for this minor. Since the list of courses students are allowed to pick from is broad, it is highly recommended students double check the course prerequisites while planning. Per University rules, a minor can only have six credits (two courses) overlapping with a student's major.

Degree Evaluation Tool

UMW provides access to the Degree Evaluation Planning tool through Banner. You can use this to track the degree requirements that you have completed, those in progress, and those which you have not yet begun.

Directions for use are here:
https://academics.umw.edu/registrar/degree-completion-requirements/degree-evaluation-guide-for-students/

Registration and Course Schedule

Getting Started: See the UMW Registrar's page for general information about registration. The "forms" tab links to many important course-related forms for students, including signing up for individual study, internship, URES projects.

Pre-registration Advising

Every student is required to meet with their current advisor prior to registration. Your Major Advisor is identified on the front page of your file in Banner. Watch your UMW email for appointment signup instructions mid-semester. Important registration dates are always included in the academic calendar: https://academics.umw.edu/calendar/

Course Schedule

Current and past course schedules are available through Dr Finlayson's schedule link: http://ianfinlayson.net/umw-courses

Use the "Choose another term" link at the top left to change the semester view. Use the radio buttons at the top of the page to narrow the display to open courses, gen ed courses, online courses, etc.

Department Faculty and Roles

Political Science & International Affairs has 9 full-time faculty and additional adjunct faculty members.

Full-Time Faculty

Professor Rosalyn Cooperman, PSCI Department Chair
Ph.D., Vanderbilt University
Research Interests: American Government: Political Parties, Congress, Gender and Political Participation
Courses regularly taught: Congress; Federal Judiciary; Gender & Politics; Contemporary American Politics; First Year Seminar on U.S. Campaigns & Elections

Professor Jason Davidson (on sabbatical AY2024-25)
Ph.D., Georgetown University
Research Interests: American Foreign and Security Policy, British, French, and Italian Foreign and Security Policy, and International Security
Courses regularly taught: Introduction to International Relations; Strategic and Conflict Studies; American Foreign Policy; Alliance Politics

Professor Stephen Farnsworth
Ph.D., Georgetown University
Research Interests: American Government, Media and Politics, and Elections
Courses regularly taught: Mass Media and Politics; Parties and Elections; American Presidency; U.S. Constitutional Reform

Professor Surupa Gupta
Ph.D., University of Southern California
Research Interests: International Political Economy, Politics of Globalization, Comparative Politics of South Asia, Indian Foreign Policy, and Gender and Development
Courses regularly taught: Introduction to International Relations; International Political Economy; Gender and Development; Politics of South Asia

Professor Guanyi Leu
Ph.D., University of Virginia
Research Interests: International Relations, International Political Economy, China's Political Economy and Foreign Relations, East Asian Economies and Politics, and China-Taiwan-US Relations
Courses regularly taught: Introduction to International Relations; Government and Politics of China; East Asia in World Affairs; Politics of Developing Countries

Professor Emile Lester (on sabbatical AY2024-25)
Ph.D., University of Virginia
Research Interests: Political Philosophy, Research Methods, Religion and Politics, Presidency, and American History
Courses regularly taught: Introduction to Political Science; History of Political Thought I and II; Religion and Politics

Professor Melissa Martinez
Ph.D., University of North Texas
Research Interests: Human rights, Latin American Politics, International Organizations, International Law, and Violent Non-State Actors
Courses regularly taught: Introduction to Political Science; Latin American Politics; Drug Politics in Latin America; International Human Rights

Professor Jared McDonald
Ph.D., University of Maryland, College Park
Research Interests: American Government, Public Opinion, Political Psychology, Voting and Elections, and Research Methodology
Courses regularly taught: American Government, Research & Writing in Political Science; American Public Opinion; Race & Ethnicity in U.S. Politics

Professor Ranjit Singh
Ph.D., University of Virginia
Research Interests: Comparative Politics, International Relations, Politics of the Middle East, and Environmental Politics
Courses regularly taught: Introduction to Political Science; Politics of the Middle East & North Africa; International Relations Theory; Environmental Politics

Adjunct Faculty

Arthur Speyer
M.S. Strategic Intelligence, National Intelligence University (NIU) /Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Washington, D.C.
M.S., Military Studies, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA
Research Interests: The Intelligence Community, Russian Foreign Policy, Soviet/Russian Politics, National Security Strategy, and the Future of Conflict
Courses regularly taught: Russian Foreign Policy; The Intelligence Community; Soviet Successor States

David Hamon
Research Interests: American Foreign Policy and International Security, Foreign Malign Influence and Disinformation
Courses regularly taught: Cybersecurity; Weapons of Mass Destruction; Security and Conflict Studies

Faculty Roles

Your Academic Advisor

- Once your declaration form has been processed, you will be assigned one of the above faculty at random. You will receive an email with your advisor's name and contact information.
- You can find your advisor's name in Banner.
- You will meet with them every semester before registration (look for an email or other message from them each October/March).
- You should come to your advising appointment prepared. ("Prepared" means you have thought about what courses you need/want to take the following semester, and are coming to get your advisor's sign-off on those choices.)
- Do ask your advisor's advice on anything you wish to know about the major or its requirements! They can also answer questions about graduate school.
- Your academic advisor is most frequently the person who will serve as advisor for academic internships, particularly if you are completing an internship in their general field of interest.

Department Career & Graduate School Advisor

- Professor Rosalyn Cooperman is the Department Career & Graduate School Advisor for AY2024-25 (rcooperm@umw.edu)
- Political Science and International Affairs will offer a department-specific After Mary Washington (AMW) designated course beginning in AY2025-26. This course will be offered at least once each year.
- UMW Political Science webpage has an AMW section that highlights the breadth and scope of amazing careers our alumni pursue.
- See also the section in this document on Internships
- Each spring the Department hosts a Career and Grad School panel featuring UMW Poli Sci & IA alumni who talk about their work and how they got started in their career. This panel is open to all UMW students.
- Go to the Career Advisors with questions like:
    - "What kinds of careers are available in Political Science / International Affairs / Security & Conflict Studies?"
    - "Can you look at my resume and see if it looks strong?"
    - "I'm nervous about an upcoming interview. What should I expect?"
    - The UMW Career Center can help, too.

The Department Chair

- Professor Rosalyn Cooperman (rcooperm@umw.edu)
- The "Department Chair" is the administrative focal point in the department. They participate in many department and University-level meetings and complete lots of paperwork. This is an honor we rotate among our department faculty (once every three years).
- If you have a complaint about a professor or a dispute about one of your courses, you must try to resolve it with the instructor first.
- If that doesn't work, the department chair is the next person to contact. (Pro tip: The first question the chair will ask is, "have you spoken to your instructor about your concern?")

Department Opportunities

Getting Started: Students in our Department have many opportunities for professional development, socializing, and networking. Student clubs and Department-related groups are listed in this section.

Annual Events

- The Department hosts speakers and other events throughout the academic year. These events are announced in classes and posted to our Department webpage and social media pages.
- Alumni Career and Graduate School panel is held annually in the spring semester and features Political Science and International Affairs alumni who share their professional experiences and career advice with students.
- Throughout the year the Department hosts social events for current and prospective majors, including a "welcome back" open house each fall, and a coffee and bagel break ahead of finals week.
- Department awards and graduating seniors reception is held each April along with the Pi Sigma Alpha induction ceremony. This event honors outstanding achievement by students in the PS and IA majors and celebrates our graduating seniors.

Clearance Preparedness Program

If you are thinking about working for a company or government agency that requires a security clearance, you may be interested in the CCI's Clearance Preparedness Program. This is a free benefit program for UMW students. Your Academic Advisor can help answer questions you may have or direct you to someone in our department who can help answer your questions. See this website for more info: https://cyberinitiative.org/talent-development/cci-clearance-preparedness-program.html

Department Representatives

Each year we have about a dozen or so Political Science and International Affairs majors who serve as Department Representatives to represent the Department at University events, such as Admissions open houses, and at other events like the Majors Fair. Department representatives are nominated by faculty, but we are always looking for motivated students to represent our Department and help organize social events for majors. If you are interested, email Professor Cooperman, (rcooperm@umw.edu), Department Chair.

Pi Sigma Alpha

Pi Sigma Alpha – The National Political Science Honor Society , is the Political Science discipline's only honorary society. UMW's chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha is the Kappa Upsilon chapter. Membership in Pi Sigma Alpha is determined by your year in school as well as your GPA within and outside of the Political Science or International Affairs major. The induction ceremony for Pi Sigma Alpha is held each April here on campus. Pi Sigma Alpha members are eligible to participate in the Annual Pi Sigma Alpha undergraduate conference held each year in Washington, D.C., submit research for publication in Pi Sigma Alpha's scholarly journal, and enter national writing contests for outstanding honors thesis and course paper (as nominated by faculty). See UMW Pi Sigma Alpha (link to appropriate link on webpage) for more information. Students who believe they meet the eligibility criteria for membership in Pi Sigma Alpha should contact Professor Steve Farnsworth (add his email), the current advisor.

UMW International Relations Organization

Student Contacts: Jackson Ackermann (jackerma@mail.umw.edu)
Wil Kent (tkent@mail.umw.edu)
Faculty Contact: Prof. Nabil al-Tikriti (naltikri@umw.edu)

UMWIRO is Mary Washington's Model UN organization, sometimes referred to as "UMWMUN." They gather weekly and also run Saturday Simulations, which allows students to practice their Model UN skills. This club usually attends one conference per semester to compete against other universities.

UMW Votes

Student Contacts: Jorrin Casa de Calvo (jcasadec@mail.umw.edu)
Melanie Billescas (mbillesc@mail.umw.edu)
Tonia Attie (tattie@mail.umw.edu)
Sarah Tyree-Herman (styreeh@mail.umw.edu)
Faculty Contact: Sarah Dewees (sdewees@umw.edu)

UMW Votes is a non-partisan organization committed to getting students out to vote. Particularly active around Election season, UMW Votes puts on several events in an attempt to increase youth voter turnout. On Election Day, UMW Votes organized busses to transport students to the polls and has free food for voters near the bus stop.

UMW Student Government Association

Student Executive Contacts: SGA President Will Thompson (wthomps3@mail.umw.edu)
Director of Administration Allie Fletcher (afletch3@mail.umw.edu)
Student Senate Contacts: Senate President Shad Yoder (syoder2@mail.umw.edu)
Senate VP Amira Said (asaid2@mail.umw.edu)
Faculty Contact: Dean Mellisa Jones (mjones6@umw.edu)

UMW SGA is composed of students who are elected to represent their peers in the student body. The executive branch of SGA deals directly with Administration and the Senate branch of SGA hears concerns from the student body and attempts to improve the student experience.

UMW Young Democrats

Student Contacts: Club President Shad Yoder (syoder2@mail.umw.edu)
Secretary Sydney Holroyd (sholroyd@mail.umw.edu)
Faculty Contact: Prof. Will Mackintosh (wmackin@umw.edu)

Young Democrats at UMW is a branch of a the National Club, Young Democrats of America (YDA). It is a partisan organization focusing on encouraging those in the 18-36 demographic to vote Democrat.

UMW College Republicans

Faculty Contact: Prof. Shawn Humphrey (shumphre@umw.edu)

*The College Republicans are currently seeking to regroup in the near future (Spring/Fall 2025). Interested students should reach out to the Faculty Contact listed above.

Internships and Jobs

Getting Started: This section provides information about internship and individual study opportunities for Political Science and International Affairs majors. Completion of academic internships and individual research projects - including honors theses - fulfill the Beyond the Classroom general education requirement. URES 197 also fulfills the BTC requirement

Fulfilling the Beyond the Classroom (BTC) Requirement in Political Science/International Affairs

> **Beyond the Classroom**: One faculty supervised experience involving a significant experimental learning component designed to challenge students to go outside of the bounds of the typical classroom. It is required by the University (General Education Requirements for BA/BS degrees)

How to meet the Beyond the Classroom (BTC) requirement in Political Science/International Affairs:

- Individual Study (IS): PSCI 491 or INAF 491 — Individual Study in Political Science or International Affairs, 3 credit hours registered.
    - PSCI 491H or INAF 491H — Honors Thesis in Political Science or International Affairs
    - See subsection below for more information about honors projects in the major.

- Internships in Political Science & International Affairs: PSCI 499 or INAF 499 — Internship, minimum of 1 credit hour registered
    - To qualify for BTC, Internships must have a final project/paper evaluated by the sponsoring faculty member
    - Political Science or International Affairs major who enroll in 3 credits of PSCI 499 or INAF 499 and complete it may have that internship count as 3 credits of major elective in PS or IA
    - During the course of their study at UMW, students may enroll in a maximum of 12 credit hours in PSCI or INAF 499; any internship credits above 3 credit hours count towards credit hours to graduate

- Study Abroad - Spring/Fall break, summer, or semester-long programs qualify
    - Visit: https://international.umw.edu for more information
    - Students planning to study abroad should talk to their academic advisor about their intended program of study. Study abroad courses taken at

another institution must be approved by the Department Chair before a student may apply those courses to required coursework in the major.

- URES 197 - Undergraduate Research | University of Mary Washington Academic Catalog provides an opportunity for interested, qualified students to work directly with a faculty member on a semester-long project based on the faculty member's research. Department faculty typically work with 1-2 students a semester to supervise a one-credit URES, which translates to about 3 hours of work each week to assist a professor with their research. Students interested in URES opportunities should contact faculty members directly. Students completing a URES will fulfill the Beyond the Classroom general education requirement.

  Students may repeat enrollment in a URES project once; maximum of 6 credits in URES 197 may be counted towards graduation.
  https://cas.umw.edu/polisci/for-prospective-students/student-research/student-research-ures/

  For examples of recent URES projects students have completed under faculty supervision, see here: https://cas.umw.edu/current-ures-197-projects/
  In you have any additional questions about URES 197, see here:
  https://cas.umw.edu/students/ures-197-projects/

Scholarships for Academic Internships

UMW has several scholarships that provide *significant* financial assistance for students completing academic internships, including the Corrigall and Shedlick grants, which are specific to PS and IA majors. Plan early to make sure you complete the application to support your internship. See Scholarship Manager for more information.

Internship Link Hub - here are some additional, helpful resources

- Do's and Don't of the Job Application Process (Link)
- Guide to Capitol Hill Internship (Link)
- Linkedin Group (Link)
- UMW Career Services Internships Page (Link)
- UMW Registrar's Page for Internship forms (Link)
- Virginia State Government Internships (Link)

Honors and Awards

Departmental Honors

Students may earn departmental honors by completing research of exemplary quality beyond a single semester. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.4 both within and outside of the PS or IA major. Students must also secure a faculty advisor in the department to supervise the honors project and provide counsel on related matters, like applying for a UMW Undergraduate Research Grant. Honors projects also require a second faculty reader; the faculty advisor for the honors project will assist the student in identifying that second faculty reader. An honors project in PS or IA requires an oral defense - an oral presentation of the completed honors project research - in front of the faculty advisor and second reader before the designation of honors is bestowed on the project. Students who receive departmental honors for their project graduate with honors in the department, and are recognized as having done so in the UMW Commencement program.

Typically, an honors project unfolds over two semesters. It begins with a readings course (PSCI 491 or INAF 491) in the first semester to narrow the topic of inquiry and gain familiarity with research in that area, and also to identify the research question for the honors project. Students then enroll in PSCI 491H or INAF 491H to complete their project in the final semester at UMW. Special circumstances may permit a student to complete an honors project in one semester; the student will work with the project's faculty advisor to determine whether the successful completion of a one-semester honors project is feasible .

Students completing an honors project are encouraged (and may be required by their faculty advisor) to present their research in another forum, such as the Pi Sigma Alpha National Student Research Conference in Washington, D.C. or UMW Research and Creativity Symposium on campus.

Upon completion of the honors project, students must submit their work to the UMW Library, where a copy of the project is kept on file and accessible to other researchers.

Honors Program students: Students in the Honors Program who are PS and/or IA majors must complete an Honors Capstone as a part of the Honors Program requirements. An honors project, as described above, meets the requirements for the Capstone once it is also approved by the Honors Program Director. Honors Program students who complete an honors project in PS or IA will graduate with Honors from the University and the Department. See UMW Honors Program for more information about their requirements and procedures.

Departmental Awards

Each year the Department of Political Science and International Affairs makes four awards to outstanding PS and IA majors as described below. A cash prize accompanies each award, and the recipients of the Fickett and Fitschen award winners are printed in the UMW Commencement program. Faculty nominate students for these awards, and award winners are announced each spring at the Pi Sigma Alpha induction and Graduating Seniors reception.

Lewis Fickett Award

The Lewis Fickett Award is given to the most outstanding graduating senior in International Affairs. Eligible students are nominated and selected by faculty.

Ann Elizabeth Fitschen Memorial Award

The Ann Elizabeth Fitschen Memorial Award is given to the most outstanding graduating senior in Political Science. Eligible students are nominated and selected by faculty.

Alumni Awards

There are two awards in this category; one for an outstanding junior or senior in the Political Science and International Affairs majors, respectively. Eligible students are nominated and selected by faculty.

After Mary Washington (AMW) and Alumni Information

Visit the University's Networking site, Network Mary Wash for more information about opportunities to connect current students with alumni.

See also our Department webpage for more information about the careers and opportunities our students pursue after graduating from UMW.

Transfer Credits

Transfer Credits Earned Before Enrolling at UMW

Students who earn Dual Enrollment credit in high school or who have earned college credits prior to enrolling in UMW should follow the transfer credit process outlined by the Office of Admissions
https://www.umw.edu/admissions/transfer/transferring-credits/

Transfer Credits through the Virginia Community College System
UMW accepts credits for a wide range of courses offered through the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), including credit for courses that can count toward the computer science and cybersecurity majors.

A full-list of VCCS courses that are guaranteed to transfer to UMW is available here:
https://academics.umw.edu/registrar/transfer-information/resources-and-publications/babs-transfer-credit-guide/transferrable-credit/virginia-community-college-system-vccs/

Re-evaluation of Transfer Credits

If you are transferring from the VCCS system, your transfer credits will be evaluated using the equivalency guide linked above. If you transfer from any other institution, the Registrar's Office will provide an initial evaluation of your transfer credits.

If you took a course that you believe is equivalent to a Political Science or International Affairs course but received non-major credit rather than a course equivalency in the initial transfer credits review, you can submit a "Request to Re-evaluate Transfer Credit" form. You will need a syllabus for each course that you are requesting re-evaluation for. To expedite the process, contact the current department chair prior to completing the form.
https://academics.umw.edu/registrar/forms/

Transfer Credits Earned While Enrolled at UMW

If you wish to take any courses beyond the pre-approved courses at VCCS, you must submit a Request to Study at Another US Institution form. If the course will count toward your major, the department must approve the course before you take it.
https://academics.umw.edu/registrar/forms/