In 2024, nearly 100 countries will hold elections, affecting almost half the world’s population. From security to climate change to the future of cooperation to the impact of artificial intelligence, the world will need a clearer view of how global issues play out in their lives.

A degree in international affairs, policy, and related disciplines provides that kaleidoscope of lenses. Graduates see challenges from many different angles because of the interdisciplinary foundation built in graduate school. They can then bring solutions into focus for policymakers, industry leaders, and the public.

Training in international affairs, policy, and related disciplines blends broad preparation in critical thinking, analysis, communications, management, and teamwork with deep regional, cultural, economic, and policy expertise.

Schools’ interdisciplinary curricula and diverse communities integrate differing perspectives.

Students develop a worldview to evaluate information—and separate facts from opinions. Then, with a focus on professional writing, public speaking, and intercultural communication, graduates can convey what they know to many different audiences.

As you look for a graduate degree, ask how the program fosters both expertise and adaptability. Consider what insights you can gain into how issues affect international, national, and local affairs. Look at how the school brings different perspectives into the conversation. Ask how it provides practical experiences to see issues up close. Examine how the school cultivates leadership qualities in students, as well as engages current policymakers, to build the future of international relations.

As elections shape those in leadership around the world, studying international affairs and policy can offer you a new vision for shared ways to solve problems.

By Carmen Iezzi Mezzera
Executive Director
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What is your strategic vision for Thunderbird over the next several years?

Thunderbird and Arizona State University’s rich history and commitment to inclusivity and excellence resonate deeply with my own values and vision for our collective future. Together, we will build on Thunderbird’s legacy, interdisciplinary research, and a diverse and dynamic community to shape the next generation of global leaders.

Our vision is to forge a network of innovative, resilient, and culturally astute leaders who are equipped to tackle global challenges in our digitally interconnected, complex, and dynamic world. We will leverage cutting-edge technology and research to deliver unparalleled educational experiences and to facilitate sustainable and equitable economic growth worldwide.

These cross-sectoral Thunderbird leaders, uniquely equipped with skills and new thinking at the intersection of the global and digital, will be change agents driving innovation. Our graduates will not just thrive in the global economy—they will redefine it, creating the industries, ecosystems, and future we all want for ourselves and future generations.

What innovative programs or initiatives do you intend to introduce to ensure Thunderbird is at the forefront of global business education?

Today, we can imagine a multidecade shift as generative and applied artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and life science breakthroughs—along with the vast data facilitated by ubiquitously connected devices—enable new technologies, businesses, and types of jobs.

We must try to anticipate how such cascading changes will impact people’s lives, society, culture, policy, and the planet. Thunderbird is critical right now in equipping leaders to shape this future, creating greater, sustainable, shared prosperity; we will be future-forward, future-focused, and future-ready.

We plan to introduce cutting-edge classes in our degree and nondegree programs that integrate the latest technological advancements, such as AI, cyber-physical systems, new data architecture, spatial computing, and cybersecurity, into our curriculum, at a level that is targeted for leaders and managers, ensuring our students are well-prepared for the digital economy. We will also deepen partnerships with leading institutions and organizations worldwide, creating opportunities for our students and faculty to engage in impactful international collaborations. Additionally, we will launch initiatives focused on sustainability, social impact, and inclusive leadership, reflecting our commitment to addressing the pressing challenges of our time.

By fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability, we will ensure that Thunderbird remains at the forefront of global education, producing leaders who are equipped to drive innovation and positive change across industries, governments, and regions.

Furthermore, we will emphasize research that is applied and explores the emergence of our digital world within different cultural and linguistic frameworks. Understanding these diverse perspectives is crucial for effective leadership at the highest levels and to produce groundbreaking insights and solutions to global challenges.
How do you see artificial intelligence (AI) impacting global cybersecurity in the next decade?
Artificial intelligence will aid both attackers and defenders in cybersecurity. Attackers will find it easier to craft tailored social engineering campaigns, identify software vulnerabilities, and write malware. Meanwhile, defenders will benefit from AI’s ability to detect anomalous online traffic or behavior, find and patch vulnerabilities, and identify social engineering attempts. While AI will undoubtedly alter the global cybersecurity landscape, it remains uncertain if it will make systems more secure or more vulnerable. Most likely, AI will enhance resilience to some types of attacks while increasing susceptibility to others.

What are the key ethical considerations in the deployment of AI in cybersecurity?
A key ethical consideration is the training data used for developing security-related machine learning algorithms, as security incident data is highly sensitive and often not widely shared. Another consideration is the extent to which AI will be relied upon for security tests and assessments and who will be held accountable if those assessments are incorrect. Additionally, the decision on how widely to share AI tools for cybersecurity is critical, as sharing these algorithms could make it easier for attackers to bypass them.

How can international cooperation be fostered to address the challenges posed by AI in cybersecurity?
Fostering international cooperation around cybersecurity is a significant challenge because many of the most active countries in collecting and exercising cyber capabilities—namely, the United States, Russia, and China—have not been aligned on acceptable state behavior in cyberspace. To foster cooperation around AI in cybersecurity, governments need to address these differences and consider reframing AI development as a matter of shared values and beliefs about which AI applications should be off-limits and why.

What role does policy play in shaping the future of AI and cybersecurity?
Policy is vital in shaping how AI is developed for cybersecurity and the documentation, testing, and assessment required. Governments are already issuing regulations to address security, safety, and bias in AI algorithms, significantly influencing the types of AI tools developed and their adoption. These policies will determine the pace and extent to which AI tools are used in cybersecurity decision-making.

Can you discuss any notable trends in cyber-insurance and how they relate to AI-driven threats?
The advancement of AI raises questions about liability for mistakes or accidents caused by AI, similar to issues seen with self-driving cars and medical diagnoses. Insurers need to address these liability questions to model and price risks accurately or exclude AI-related risks from coverage to avoid unmanageable claims. As AI changes decision-making processes, it also transforms our understanding of responsibility for accidents and security breaches, highlighting the need to reassess who should be liable when machines make critical decisions.
Preparing Students for an Interconnected World

Vice Admiral Robert Murrett (Ret) joined the Maxwell School in 2011, following four years as director of the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, which collects and analyzes information in support of military operations and national security. His thirty-four-year career in U.S. Naval intelligence included assignments in Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific. He works closely with the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation, along with others at Syracuse University that share American expertise on veterans’ issues with Ukrainian leaders looking to meet the needs of a rapidly rising veteran population.

How do you prepare students to understand the complexities of global conflict?

We prepare students with mentorship from top scholars and practitioners involved in research and policymaking related to international conflict and national security. They include the Honorable James E. Baker, professor and director of the Syracuse University Institute for Security Policy and Law, who is one of the most highly regarded national security lawyers and policy advisors in the nation. Another colleague, Michael J. Williams, recently returned from a Fulbright-sponsored trip to study NATO and Russia in Brussels.

In addition, Maxwell is home to the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, which serves as a hub for research and hosts hundreds of international conversation tables, panel discussions, speakers, and other events that expose students to diverse perspectives. Classroom instruction is paired with experiential learning: For instance, we provide students with case studies that require critical examination and decision-making. These studies recently resulted in trips to the Institute for Defense Analyses in Washington, DC, where students presented findings on research topics, including budget analysis of quality-of-life improvements for military personnel.

What are some of the emerging concerns in international relations?

A top issue is foreign malign influence, whether in media or elections, by state actors and nonstate actors. There are so many outlets for exerting influence that lack checks and balances. It’s a significant challenge because forty of the world’s democracies are having elections this year. This deeply impacts our global community—the tremendous concern is reflected in our students and among faculty colleagues. We strive to ensure issues are explored with an emphasis on facts and civil discourse, and we encourage careful consideration of the credibility of information.

How does an interdisciplinary approach benefit students?

Students in the public administration and international affairs department collaborate with other departments within Maxwell, such as political science, history, and economics, and are engaged with students across the university’s thirteen school and colleges. This happens in classrooms and in our fifteen research centers and institutes, including the Autonomous Systems Policy Institute and the Institute for Democracy, Journalism and Citizenship. Exposure to a range of perspectives prepares students to tackle multidimensional international challenges. Alumni routinely say the interdisciplinary approach developed their critical thinking, helped them recognize and appreciate ethical concerns, and increased their ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges.

Syracuse University
Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs
Preparing Humanitarian Leaders: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Addressing Global Crises

How do the Elliott School's programs prepare students to address humanitarian crises and provide effective assistance in complex global contexts?

At the Elliott School, courses on humanitarian action take a multidisciplinary and intellectually rigorous approach, paying particular attention to cultural context, ethics, field-based applied research, and innovative practices. A foundational course in humanitarian governance and policy introduces students to the global humanitarian system, key humanitarian agencies and donors, international humanitarian law and ethics, dilemmas in humanitarian assistance, and key challenges to delivering humanitarian aid. Specialized courses help students develop expertise in locally led humanitarian assistance; climate change and humanitarian assistance; refugees, migration, and displaced people; gender and security; humanitarian communication; education in humanitarian emergencies; ethics; and emergency management.

Students may pursue a concentration in humanitarian assistance in a number of our degree programs. It is a specific area of concentration or specialization, available under the following Elliott School master’s degree programs, including the security policy studies program conflict resolution concentration, the Master of International Affairs, and the Master of International Development Studies.

Are there fieldwork and research opportunities available to students looking to gain practical skills in humanitarian operations?

Most graduate courses provide project-based learning where students work on policy problems in consultation with humanitarian nongovernmental organizations or agencies. The humanitarian assistance section of the global capstone, as well as the capstone in international development studies, provide an in-depth and extensive opportunity for student teams to work on a year-long project for a humanitarian client. Undergraduate students may work on independent research projects on the topic of humanitarian assistance in Dean’s Scholars and other undergraduate research opportunities. Students can also reach out about available research assistantships to work on research projects directed by a faculty member.

How does the Elliott School approach teaching the ethical considerations and challenges involved in delivering humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations around the world?

The Elliott School approaches teaching ethical considerations and humanitarian challenges through initiatives like the Humanitarian Action Initiative, an academic and research hub that convenes and cultivates the school’s curriculum, scholarly research, and policy expertise on topics related to humanitarian assistance, and the Leadership, Ethics, and Practice Initiative, which integrates the exploration and analysis of ethics topics throughout undergraduate and graduate education. The school aims to identify ethical issues in every subject and course, exploring them through case studies or other instructional means, through courses such as humanitarian governance and policy, global justice, and accountability and ethics in humanitarian and disaster settings that address questions and issues related to the ethics of humanitarian action. The school regularly hosts speakers on ethics topics and assists students interested in doing research on humanitarian issues.
Fusing International Policy with Language and Area Studies

How does the Hamilton Lugar School prepare students to help address emerging security challenges?

Security challenges don’t occur in the abstract. They emerge from real places and involve real people with histories, values, identities, and languages. Addressing security threats requires understanding both the localities where they arise and the national and international institutions designed to mitigate their effects.

Employers are looking for people who understand global affairs broadly and who also have deep knowledge of specific countries and regions. The Hamilton Lugar School gives students a broad understanding of global affairs and offers unparalleled breadth in area studies, including more than eighty world language programs—more than any other university in the United States. This combination gives Hamilton Lugar graduates a unique advantage.

What are the advantages of studying critical and less commonly taught languages?

Like most countries, the United States faces a severe shortfall in young professionals proficient in languages crucial to national security and foreign affairs. Advanced knowledge of languages such as Arabic, Russian, and Chinese gives students an obvious edge in understanding key world regions and securing prized public and private sector jobs. Indiana University hosts language flagship programs supported by the U.S. Defense Department to build student fluency in each of those languages through intensive study on campus and a funded year overseas in Morocco, Kazakhstan, or Taiwan.

Studying less commonly taught languages—from Burmese to Turkish to Kiswahili—is also a path for success. When coupled with area studies coursework, it gives students prized knowledge that relatively few possess. This enables students to make important academic and professional contributions and to get jobs at government agencies, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in need of people with their expertise. The ability to choose from dozens of such languages is a distinctive hallmark of the Hamilton Lugar School.

How can students apply their knowledge of international policy, regional studies, and languages outside the classroom?

Success in global affairs requires analyzing complex problems from multiple angles, understanding diverse stakeholder views, formulating ways forward, and communicating them persuasively. Students can hone these skills in a variety of ways. The Hamilton Lugar School hosts regular role-play simulations and workshops on topics from European migration to Korean security and engages practitioners in seminars and major events, such as our annual student-led conference on America’s Role in the World® foreign policy conference.

Students conduct research in partnership with the U.S. State Department through the diplomacy lab program. They intern with leading think tanks and NGOs, join the annual Conference of Parties on global climate change as observers, and work with Defense Department clients through the Hacking for Defense program. They also work with faculty members on almost every area of the world and in myriad languages—developing the academic knowledge to analyze vexing global issues and the practical skills to make a positive difference.
Exploring the SAIS Emerging Technologies Initiative

What is the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Emerging Technologies Initiative?
The SAIS Emerging Technologies Initiative explores transformative technologies and their global implications. Our goal is to bridge the gap between tech advancements and international policy, equipping policymakers with a deep understanding of emerging technologies and helping technologists grasp the broader social, political, economic, and ethical contexts of their work.

How did the initiative come to be?
The initiative was launched in November 2023 in response to the rapid technological evolution and its impact on global affairs. Recognizing the need for a dedicated hub, SAIS is bringing together experts from across Johns Hopkins University and Washington, D.C. to offer opportunities for students, alumni, and the broader community. As a SAIS alumna, I was excited to return to my alma mater to direct this initiative.

What are some of the global trends that helped identify the need for this initiative?
Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, space technologies, autonomous weapons, and quantum computing, all have the power to reshape international relations, security, and governance. These technologies have inherently transnational impact and spark crucial questions about governance, regulations, trade, economics, and the future of warfare.

Why is this initiative important for professionals in international affairs?
In 2024, it’s impossible to study international affairs and global policy without understanding emerging technologies and their implications. The initiative leverages expertise across Johns Hopkins University, including but not limited to the School of Medicine, Applied Physics Laboratory, and Whiting School of Engineering—to prepare professionals for this new environment.

What are some of the most pressing challenges facing technology governance today?
Consider some examples where an understanding of these technologies will be important for future international policymakers and leaders: potential semiconductor supply chain disruptions in the event of a Taiwan crisis, the increased use of autonomous weapons in warfare, the rise of commercial space ventures and their implications on economics and security, and differing approaches to artificial intelligence regulation across the Atlantic. Moreover, each of these technologies places greater demand on the grid, so students and future leaders need to address the energy implications of these increased computational needs. The initiative aims to dissect these complex issues and bring in more expertise to SAIS to help students and mid-career officials understand this multifaceted landscape.

How can students and the community get involved with the initiative?
The initiative is bringing in more faculty expertise to expand course offerings on technology policy and foundational topics, working closely with the Alperovitch Institute and the Technology and Innovation focus area of the master of arts in international relations program. We have an annual fellowship for students to work directly with the initiative and engage in research projects. We also run the Trilateral Technology Leaders Training Program, which recently brought officials from Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea to SAIS and Silicon Valley for an immersive experience. We collaborate with the State Department, White House, civil society, and private companies to expand engagement opportunities for all participants.
“Sustainability” is a multifaceted concept. What aspects of sustainability are central to your work? How do you approach the concept of sustainability in your research?

Typically defined, sustainability is a state where the pursuit of well-being for societies now does not undermine the well-being of societies in the future. The unsustainability of modern life—and of the political and social systems that uphold it—is a “tragedy of the horizon” that forms the core conundrum of climate politics and sustainability research. My work, and much of the contemporary social science research on global environmental governance, is about understanding how experiments in managing long-term problems at the global level are succeeding or failing—and why.

What have been the most interesting findings of your research?

I research sustainability in the context of corporate social (and environmental) responsibility (CSR). CSR is often considered a weak mechanism to induce change in corporate behavior. However, my research has shown that the frameworks developed in voluntary initiatives can become embedded in how regulation and markets operate, making corporate commitments to these frameworks effectively mandatory and creating space to ratchet up the rules. For instance, in a current working paper with a colleague, we demonstrate that the integration of the UN Global Compact into Standard & Poor’s environmental, social, and governance ratings has massively increased commitments to human rights for publicly traded companies in the US. Or, as I argue in my ongoing book project, the European Commission used frameworks from global CSR initiatives to accelerate “sustainable finance” regulations, reshaping Europe’s financial sector in the process.

What are the most critical things students of international affairs need to learn about sustainability to be prepared for the future?

In the 2023 Global Risks Report from the World Economic Forum, the authors spelled out the zeitgeist of our era: “concurrent shocks, deeply interconnected risks and eroding resilience are giving rise to the risk of polycrises.” Understanding these issue interlinkages—whether we consider climate change, drought, and food scarcity, or the conjoint concerns of AI development, critical mineral access, and geopolitical struggle—is fundamental for the next generation of international affairs students. Addressing climate change, for example, is no longer a matter of mere atmospheric accounting—it’s a question of supply chains, innovation, macroeconomics, and security. The pedagogical implications are clear: we need to equip the next generation of leaders in international affairs to parse complexity, understand issue interdependence, and transcend the siloing of issue expertise.

How do you best prepare students to be adaptable in a rapidly changing global environment?

Academics are reluctant to provide answers to questions without exhausting all the available evidence. However, the information environment that professionals work in can often be poor, uncertainty can dominate, and timelines might constrain. We incrementally build expertise over long periods, but the rules of the game in issue areas can change quickly. That’s why what we teach is not just about the subject matter but about giving students conceptual tools to guide decision-making despite changing contexts. These tools include how to build and consider counterfactual scenarios, how to evaluate evidence of varying quality in decision-making, and how to break down problems into their constituent elements.
Navigating Global Shifts: MIP’s Innovative Approach to Policy Change

How is your program looking at the changes taking place around the world in this “year of elections”? Presently, there is a tight linkage between domestic politics and the international order. Populist and nationalist parties around the world have questioned the benefits of the liberal international order, which they accuse of reflecting the interests of elites and widening inequality. It is impossible to understand how relationships between countries will evolve without understanding the politics within countries; our program seeks to focus on both. Some of the greatest challenges to existing international institutions are coming from within the United States, which, to a greater extent than in previous decades, means that knowledge of the drivers of American politics is critical.

How will artificial intelligence affect the global order, and what resources does your program bring to the study of AI? Artificial intelligence has been around for a long time and has been used in any circumstance in which large quantities of data need to be processed quickly. But generative AI has created strikingly new capabilities that, in many cases, were not predicted by its creators. These will shape warfare, diplomacy, and intelligence collection and analysis, and will have complex effects on jobs and employment. At this point, it is impossible to predict what its effects will be down the road, since we are only now building on large language models and applying them in specific sectors and professions.

Stanford University lies at the heart of Silicon Valley, and Stanford faculty and students have played a key role in developing many of the technologies surrounding AI. There is the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence and the Cyber Policy Center within the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. The latter hosts the Cyber Policy track of the Master’s in International Policy (MIP), and many MIP students have focused on issues like the policy implications of AI, content moderation, and global regulatory frameworks in the United States, Europe, and in the Global South.

What distinctive approaches does your program take to the teaching of international policy? Most policy programs focus on policy analysis—the ability to write a memo explaining the optimal course of action. However, the best policies often don’t take into account real-world constraints and cannot be implemented. Many policy schools fail to give students skills that go beyond analysis and teach students how to operate under constraints. This is a particular problem with the digitalization of policy, where the actual way that actors and organizations will use tools depends on first-hand understanding of the conditions, political, social, and cultural, under which they are applied.

MIP has designed a three-quarter sequence to provide students with a problem-solving framework to help them think through policies from problem identification to solution development to implementation. Students work with external partners to help them deal with issues they are currently facing. We seek to train people who are not simply technocrats but leaders who can accomplish meaningful and effective policy change in their future careers.
Climate Change is Mostly a Human Problem, Not a Technological One

What are the environmental stakes for the upcoming U.S. presidential election?

For climate and energy, this election is critical. Since the Paris Agreement, there’s been progress internationally on achievable climate targets. Former President Donald Trump pulled us out of the agreement, and President Joe Biden got us back in. He also passed the biggest climate legislation to date.

If Trump gets elected, he will withdraw from Paris again—this time it could stick, plus he has pledged to roll back Biden’s climate policy. The stakes couldn’t be higher.

What are the broader geopolitical dynamics at play?

We’re not talking about just the future; climate change is a current issue. Large swaths of the world are becoming uninhabitable.

Climate is a force multiplier for chaos. For example, we’re seeing the rise of right-wing fascist movements, many fueled by a backlash to immigration. As climate change accelerates, millions more people will be displaced, which will overwhelm a lot of systems and could intensify this trend.

We have many developing nations facing repeated onslaughts of droughts, storms, and excess heat, which threaten to overwhelm these societies and lead to state collapse. Many states in the coming years may simply come apart under the sheer weight of continuous climate emergency.

We are working to reshape our entire energy system with huge geopolitical implications. Right now, most gas and oil profits are fueling petrostates such as Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, many of which are autocracies. Accelerating the transition away from fossil fuel will weaken those states. But in the short term, things could get very volatile.

What makes a difference in addressing climate change?

The two most important things are decarbonizing the energy system and creating a sustainable food system. The biggest barriers to addressing climate change aren’t technological: they are vested interests and inertia. We have a mostly human problem, which is why Middlebury Institute’s environmental master’s program focuses on the social sciences. The innovation is in the implementation.

Our current food system is an inefficient way to produce calories and protein. Feeding plants to animals, then killing them, wastes about 90% of the plants’ energy. We could change this with existing knowledge and technology, but how do you convince eight billion people to eat differently or change the incentive structures for farmers and agribusinesses? It’s an incredibly complex, daunting challenge, requiring the kind of skills taught at the Middlebury Institute: intercultural communication, policy analysis and advocacy, strategic communication, planning and management, and coalition-building.

How can young professionals make an impact?

There is nothing more consequential right now than working on climate issues.

Do what you do best. There is no silver bullet. We need people with a wide range of skills working across every dimension. With master’s degrees in environmental policy and management, trade, nonproliferation and terrorism, and international development, our students benefit tremendously from a range of expertise and the international orientation of our curriculum and our student body.

You can find our alumni doing everything, from making the supply chain more sustainable at Microsoft to setting national and international ocean policy to working on environmental justice at the Environmental Protection Agency to starting their own grassroots environmental organizations.
Navigating AI: Equipping Future Leaders for a Complex World

What do you see as the main global challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI)?

Artificial intelligence is a general-purpose technology that will impact every conceivable field of human endeavor. In this respect, AI is akin to electricity, and it has become increasingly integrated into the backbone of our global commerce, communications, defense systems, and other key aspects of the critical infrastructure that powers our modern civilization.

Yet, despite its immense benefits, significant vulnerabilities persist. Machines capable of sophisticated information processing pose tremendous opportunities for economic growth and societal well-being. But the potential threats also are extraordinary: autonomous weaponry, AI-augmented cyberwarfare, sophisticated disinformation campaigns, and geopolitical instability, as nations race to deploy these unpredictable technologies in great power competition.

Competition over strategic technologies is growing, so far without standard international rules of the road.

How does Jackson prepare students to tackle the changing role of technology in international affairs and geopolitics?

The Schmidt Program on Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, and National Power fosters research and teaching that spans the disciplines of computer science, data science, economics, engineering, history, international relations, law, philosophy, physics, and political science. This multidisciplinary program brings prominent technologists to campus as Schmidt Program senior fellows; offers post-doctoral fellowships to Schmidt visiting scholars; supports collaborative research and student internships; and develops a robust offering of cyber- and AI-focused lectures, symposia, workshops, and conferences to further the dialogue around emerging technologies and security studies.

The Schmidt Program places teaching undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students at the core of its mission. The program encourages faculty to develop new classes available to Jackson students, as well as administer its own flagship course on “Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, and National Power.” Students familiarize themselves with AI tools through traditional classroom discussion combined with hands-on demonstrations, simulations, and group project work. For example, rather than merely discuss the challenge of disinformation and its impact on global affairs, students design their own disinformation bot and learn to utilize AI to detect disinformation online. The result is that non-STEM students appreciate the technical aspects of the challenge, while STEM students gain great exposure to the broader legal, policy, and ethical implications of the basic scientific research.

What practical opportunities does the Schmidt Program offer to graduate students at Jackson?

In today’s hyper-connected and high-tech world, future leaders need to be flexible thinkers, creative problem-solvers, and work well in interdisciplinary teams. In the Schmidt Program, students engage in group project work designed to simulate realistic scenarios and solve global challenges. For example, a group of nineteen students traveled to Beijing over spring break to engage in discussion and debate with peers at Renmin University on AI, emerging technology, and U.S.-China relations. They also traveled to Taipei for a series of high-level discussions focused on Taiwan’s leading role in the AI semiconductor supply chain, and challenges in cross-Strait relations. These are practical, hands-on experiences that provide the foreign area knowledge and technical expertise that students need to grapple with AI and its transformational impact on global affairs.
Understanding International Economic Issues Amidst Changing Global Landscape

What sets Fordham’s Master’s Program in International Political Economy and Development (Fordham IPED) apart from other international affairs programs?

Fordham IPED offers a unique, rigorous, and innovative approach to analyzing contemporary global economic relations. Issues in international economic relations and in international development are understood from both a political and an economic perspective. Furthermore, we provide a strong quantitative methods foundation that allows our students to develop robust analytical skills in data analysis, project assessment, and computer programming. We stress professional experience outside of the classroom. And we only admit a select group of about twenty students each year.

How does Fordham IPED prepare its students in anticipating changes in the international affairs landscape brought about by climate change and technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence (AI)?

Our core curriculum, consisting of economic, political, and quantitative courses, provides our students with an advanced interdisciplinary knowledge of global economic relations. Our electives allow students to specialize in the fields of international development, international economics, international banking and finance, or global environmental and resource economics.

This curriculum gives our students the analytical expertise needed to anticipate and adapt to shifts in a global economy challenged by rising nationalism, climate change, technological innovations, and increasing poverty. A pressing concern to our faculty is understanding the technological changes needed to develop a green economy that will also promote poverty reduction in the developing world, and the technological innovations, such as AI, that can facilitate greater global cooperation and promote accountable governance.

What unique advantages are available for Fordham IPED students?

Our curriculum and our location in New York City are ideal for anyone who wishes to be at the center of the world economy. Our location affords our students internship opportunities ranging from the United Nations and international nonprofit organizations to international think tanks and Wall Street.

Through an endowed summer intern fellowship program, we fund a number of field placements for our students to gain practical experience with international businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations—not only here in New York but also in Washington, DC, Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

We also complement our classes with a weekly lecture series and career trips in New York and Washington, DC, which feature a range of professionals highlighting the practitioner perspective on contemporary issues in international affairs.

Our small class size of roughly twenty students provide the opportunity for close interactions with our supportive and distinguished faculty of experts. Our students, drawn from around the world, come from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. We admit our students from among the top 40% of all applicants to U.S. graduate programs. We offer generous scholarships to exceptional students and provide funding for participation in internship placements, language immersion programs, and international fieldwork overseas.

Lastly, we have a strong alumni network and close association with various international organizations. Our placement record is strong, with about 38% of alumni in the private sector, 23% in the nonprofit sector, 30% in government, and the remaining 9% in academia. Our graduates have a strong record of winning various prestigious awards, such as Fulbright Fellowship, U.S. Presidential Management Fellowships, and international development fellowships.
What skills are needed to help students understand and prepare to manage crises like climate change and the future of cooperation?

As the climate crisis worsens, students need to understand social responses that range from “how do we reduce our contributions to climate change?” to “how do we support communities, states, and nations as they adapt to our warming world?”

Fisher: American University’s Center for Environment, Community & Equity, which I direct, is working directly with government agencies that are developing a new, green workforce through programs such as the recently begun American Climate Corps. Students at the School of International Service (SIS) will thus have a front-row seat to observe how our country is responding to the climate crisis. Furthermore, students working directly with the Center will have the chance to help us evaluate environmental programs run by government agencies as well as nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners.

How do you best prepare a student to be adaptable in a fast-changing global environment?

At SIS, we offer required skills-based courses, such as policy analysis and project management, and elective courses that cover current global issues from an interdisciplinary perspective, including global governance and cybersecurity, conflict resolution and human rights, and the intersection of global health and climate change. This interdisciplinary approach is exemplified by our new graduate certificate in Environment, Community & Equity. Along with rigorous training in the classroom, we provide fieldwork experiences for hands-on skills training in Washington, DC, and abroad. Students develop their skills in teamwork and problem-solving through thematically relevant capstone courses that require deliverables for real-world clients.

Yamanis: For example, my capstone course last summer brought SIS master’s students to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for two weeks to evaluate a program in livelihood skills, financial services, and HIV prevention for adolescent girls who are out of school. The students were embedded with a research team at the Tanzanian national hospital, where they conducted interviews with participants alongside Tanzanian research assistants, collected and analyzed qualitative data, and wrote a comprehensive report on their findings. Their recommendations are informing future government social protection and HIV programs for adolescent girls.

What practical experiences do you offer?

In addition to learning the methodological skills required to understand and address the worsening climate crisis and other international affairs challenges, we spend substantial time exposing students to civil society, government, and NGOs that are doing the work on the ground. For example, last year, students interacted with leaders from across the US federal government at a symposium on how to best train young people to respond to the climate crisis. At the same time, we offer the Natural Resources and Sustainable Development dual degree master’s program together with the United Nations-mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica. This program focuses on the on-the-ground challenges of implementing sustainable development in a country known for its successes in this area, while also providing students with hands-on experience through applied internships with a variety of organizations.
led by Ambassador John Hennessey-Niland (Ret), the Bush School’s diplomacy concentration provides students of international affairs with a real-world understanding of national security and foreign policy at a time of increasing challenges to the global, rules-based international order. American diplomacy and statecraft matter more than ever before, and the Bush School prepares its graduates—through a unique blend of theory and practice—for leadership positions in government and public service.

Why is diplomatic tradecraft so important and how does the Bush School help students acquire the critical thinking and communication skills essential for effective public service?

The students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. To meet the global challenges confronting governments, diplomats and public servants will be tasked to help manage and resolve complex global issues. Bush School graduates are well prepared for their future careers through a blend of coursework combining theory and practice and learning by doing: researching, analyzing, and framing complex issues via written papers and oral briefings. Bush students are challenged to understand the lessons of history, to utilize rigorous methods for the analysis of issues, to develop and articulate original policy proposals, and to defend their conclusions in respectful debate.

The principle of non-partisanship in public institutions is integral to our curriculum, as is a commitment to public service by our students. At the Bush School, the study of diplomacy is a key area of concentration for students in the Master of International Affairs program. Students can explore courses in American diplomacy and diplomatic negotiations, as well as take new classes that cover the United States and the Indo-Pacific or explore soft power through sports and diplomacy.

A unique element of a Bush School education is the capstone research project for a real-world client. A capstone offers students hands-on research experience and the opportunity to personally engage with and brief senior government policymakers from organizations that include the State Department and CIA and could lead to employment. The Bush School also offers intensive one-on-one preparation for the Foreign Service Exam.

How does the Bush School prepare graduates for the future?

The Bush School’s uniqueness is that it is “all in” on preparing its students for public service. This means students benefit from a professional and supportive academic environment that enables students to work closely with leading researchers, practitioners, and professors. The Bush School keeps its edge by ensuring its flexible curriculum provides students with opportunities to study new and emerging issues, to “look around the corner” so graduates are prepared for leadership roles in public service.

As a former U.S. ambassador, what attracted me to the Bush School were its students and its special blend of theory and practice, commitment to public service, and the school’s capability to assist students in addressing a world of constant change. The need for whole-of-government responses to increasingly complex global challenges and the when and how to best use hard and soft power—these are the challenges that Bush School graduates will help manage and resolve in their future careers.
Rethinking Approaches to Key Challenges Facing the World

What challenges do globalization and technology present for security and governance?

The world is undergoing a radical transformation, upending how we think about globalization, world peace, development, and prosperity. We used to believe economic exchange was going to mute great power politics by putting firms in control and states on the sideline. In recent years, we have seen the exact opposite: globalization and trade created vulnerabilities, and states are exploiting those to get at their adversaries. Whether it’s sanctions, export controls, or surveillance, the networks we built to generate prosperity are now also sources of coercion and great power conflict. Scholars need to help policymakers grapple with these challenges so they don’t spiral out of control.

How do you think Georgetown is doing that rethinking?

Georgetown is a leader in thinking through the key security and economic challenges facing the world. Our centers and programs bring policy and practice together by breaking down the silos and barriers that too often keep them apart. And Georgetown faculty are leading experts on a host of pressing problems—whether it is the economic security nexus I work on, climate, or emerging technologies.

Graduate students participate in this cutting-edge work. I work with research assistants every year; a core part of my mission as an educator is to mentor them so they can take on their own research and policy activities. Many of my students have gone on to publish their work in top academic and policy journals or work in think tanks or at international firms.

What differentiates the School of Foreign Service (SFS) from its competitors in graduate education?

One of the amazing things about SFS is that you have a series of master’s programs where you can specialize in anything from European studies to Asian studies to development to security, while you also have the advantage of being at Georgetown—a world-class institution, positioned in Washington, DC, with so many experiences at your doorstep. It’s that nested set of advantages that are unparalleled in the United States or the world.

Our students receive a world-class education in a place where they can also get real-world experience. Here at the BMW Center for German and European Studies, we routinely place students at internships with firms, such as BMW, so they can see not only how academics think about these questions but also how firms grapple with them every day.

Europe has been rocked in the last two years by a war on the continent and a series of elections in France, the United Kingdom, and an upcoming one in Germany. We’re at a transition moment, and the BMW Center and our master’s program are in a unique position to help understand what is happening in Europe and how it will impact the United States. In training the next generation of transatlantic leaders, we help them learn to manage the crises of today and work toward a peaceful and more prosperous world tomorrow. It is a critical mission, and we would love for you to join us!

PHOTO CREDIT: JESCO DENZEL
An Interdisciplinary Approach to Current Issues

Graduate programs at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien—Vienna School of International Studies (DA) prepare students to excel in a range of international careers. Located in the heart of Vienna, the DA is near international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, diplomatic missions, and cultural institutions. With its vast alumni network in more than 125 countries and fifteen active alumni chapters worldwide, the DA offers an excellent balance between theoretical and practical approaches.

There is a lot of talk about polycrisis and permacrisis. What skills are needed to help students prepare to understand and manage crises?

The crises that the world is experiencing are very much interdependent. Environmental crises, for example, increasingly come to underpin armed conflicts, economic crises affect security crises, wars give rise to migration crises, and so on. Given the intertwined nature of these challenges, a single academic angle won’t do. All our study programs are distinctly multidisciplinary. All our students look at crises through the lenses of culture, economics, history, law and political science. Depending on the study program they choose, some of them also venture out into the hard sciences. This interdisciplinarity is, so to say, in the DNA of our school. From the start in 1754, students have been educated in multiple disciplines with a view of helping them grasp the present and anticipate the future.

How is the role of technology changing international politics? How is this reflected in your curriculum or ways of teaching?

We are living in the midst of the so-called fourth industrial revolution. Digital technology advances rapidly and changes the everyday practices of most people on this planet fundamentally. The curricula at the DA are designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to comprehend and engage with this epochal change. Students have well over one hundred courses to choose from and depending on what study program they opt for: Advanced International Studies, Environmental Technology and International Affairs, Digital International Affairs—all master programs, the diploma program, or the doctoral program. They will zoom in on particular aspects of these changes that happen in front of our eyes.

There are many elections this year. The outcome of some of them may very well have repercussions for the future directions of world order. How does your teaching link domestic and international politics?

Many of our courses deal with how domestic politics affects international order and vice versa. For example, we deal with how globalization and deglobalization processes can be traced back to domestic politics and the kinds of shifting patterns of political communication that we are currently experiencing. There is plenty of polarization in domestic and international politics. More generally speaking, it is important for us that students get an in-depth understanding of particular world regions and states. This is why our school, from its very beginnings, put a strong emphasis on language training. In the eighteenth century, this included Farsi. In our days, we concentrate on the official UN languages.
Preparing Students to Influence Policy and Work for Change

Current events are rattling the global stage. How are we preparing students to address a range of challenges?

Students need to combine a significant breadth of knowledge with concrete skills to address the complex and interconnected problems we face right now. That’s why experiential learning is an important part of what we do at the School of Diplomacy. Every student has an opportunity to pursue a professional internship for academic credit. This provides a perfect opportunity to connect the knowledge they’re gaining in the classroom with the skills they’ll need to put that knowledge into action.

Throughout your career, you have focused on UN-related research. Faculty at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations are similarly engaged in projects such as conflict negotiation, strengthening international law, and designing environmental treaties. How do our students benefit from instructors who are involved in global affairs beyond the classroom?

Our faculty are consistently recognized by the university for being outstanding teachers. They have top-notch academic training and backgrounds as practitioners. They hold a deep understanding of and connections to the issues, organizations, and countries they teach. Our instructors also have extensive field experience and strong professional networks that they bring to the classroom. One example is the UN Intensive Summer Study program, which we’ve run for twenty-five years. So far, one thousand students have heard from UN diplomats, government officials, and civil society representatives in off-the-record conversations about how they’re working to address global problems.

What leadership skills do students need to develop, in order to understand and manage a rapidly shifting global environment?

We prepare our students for a career, not just a job. They need to be ready to evolve as they gain more experience and as the challenges we face continue to change as well. We give students opportunities to wrestle with international issues while they are in our program in a very concrete and skills-based way. Our National Security Fellows program is a good example. Each year, our students work on a policy project for the State Department or the Department of Defense. So far, our fellows have completed seven projects, and in every case their findings have been used by the office they’re advising to potentially influence the future direction of U.S. policy.

As a professional school of international relations, what makes the School of Diplomacy unique?

First, our highly motivated graduate students are learning leadership and policy skills with the explicit goal of working toward enhancing social justice and making a difference in the communities they serve. The second thing that distinguishes us is our multilateral focus. Here at Seton Hall, we are looking at global solutions to global problems. We do this through an extensive network of connections within the UN community, located just fourteen miles from campus. Our diverse community, renowned experts, and countless opportunities for research and leadership are unparalleled.
Teaching Global Cybersecurity in Seattle’s Tech Hub

What are the Jackson School’s suite of courses in cybersecurity and international studies designed to do?

Schools of international studies are the perfect place for a cybersecurity curriculum because cybersecurity is deeply intertwined with geopolitics and political, historical, economic, and social processes. We must understand these factors to understand why there are Chinese state-sponsored cyberattacks on U.S. infrastructure, why Russia-based ransomware organizations have become dominant cybercrime actors, and the tools governments use to surveil activists.

Tackling cybersecurity challenges also requires people who have been educated in the contexts that drive cyberattacks, who can think about risk broadly, who have the area studies knowledge needed to address threats, and who work at the intersection of security, technology, and policy. The field also needs people who can translate between the technical and non-technical. Students in my cybersecurity courses learn the history, institutions, policies, and actors that have shaped and are shaping cybersecurity today as well as become conversant in technical concepts. They also gain professional skills such as research, writing, and analyzing policy.

How much do you reimagine your teaching year-to-year to keep up with changing technologies?

I want my students to be able to participate in today’s conversations about technology and have the knowledge and skills to enter future conversations. I constantly revise my courses to include emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence. However, as much as technology changes, many cybersecurity issues do not change, so I teach some topics every year. One of my core classes is structured around major international and domestic policy issues, such as the stockpiling of vulnerabilities—or “cyberweapons”. I have been teaching about stockpiling vulnerabilities since I started teaching the class, but the way I talk about it has changed over time.

Seattle is a technology hub and in the Pacific Rim, but it’s farther from the seat of the U.S. federal government than many of our peers. Does our location impact your research and teaching or the work the students do here?

Cybersecurity is not just a U.S. federal government issue. I teach students about U.S. federal government-driven conversations, but because we are in Seattle, the beltway voices are, maybe, a bit quieter, and the voices of the private sector and local governments are a bit louder than they might be closer to Washington, DC. In that regard, being in the Pacific Northwest may have opened space for more consideration of perspectives from other stakeholders. My students also have been more likely to get jobs in the private sector or local nongovernmental organizations after graduation than working in DC.

What is the one essential skill or piece of knowledge you think every one of your students needs to graduate with, regardless of the sector they are heading into?

Political, historical, economic, social, and cultural issues underpin cybersecurity issues. Jackson School students are perfectly situated to help address cybersecurity problems because they can combine their social science training with specialization in technology and security policy.
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