

Proposal to revise the existing International Studies Minor

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Background and rationale for proposed changes

For a number of years, the IUPUI School of Liberal Arts has offered a minor and a certificate in International Studies. Relatively small numbers of students have enrolled and are currently enrolled in the existing International Studies minor and certificate programs. The programs have not been marketed extensively and have been hurt by the lack of an International Studies major.

As members of the curriculum committee already know, a proposal for a new International Studies major is currently working its way through the approval process. The proposed new International Studies major has already been approved by the curriculum committee, the resources and planning committee, the SLA faculty assembly and it has cleared the remonstrance list. It will soon be moving to the chief academic officers' level before proceeding to the Board of Trustees and the Higher Education Commission for ultimate approval. We hope to have the new major launched during the Fall 2006 semester.

When I was hired by Dean White to lead the effort to develop a new International Studies major, I expressed to him my clear dissatisfaction with the existing minor and certificate programs and my clear desire to start with a clean slate in developing the new major. Dean White agreed and the International Studies advisory committee proceeded to try to develop what it perceived to be the best possible new major without making any reference to the existing minor or certificate programs. We operated from the assumption that the new major should determine what, if any, form the minor and certificate ultimately take and not the other way around.

As such, we now have an existing International Studies minor that does not correlate or relate well to the new International Studies major. We want to revise the existing minor so that it better fits with the new major.

Specific proposal background

The current International Studies minor has four main requirements: 1) completion of 15 credit hours; 2) completion of the second year of coursework in a foreign language which does not count toward the required 15 credit hours; 3) Political Science Y219 Introduction to International Relations as the required introductory course; and 4) completion of 12 credit hours from at least three different departments focusing either on a single thematic topic or a single geographic area.

The proposed new International Studies minor (outlined below) essentially keeps the first two parts of the existing minor as outlined above and changes or revises the last two parts. Like the existing minor, the proposed new minor also requires students to complete 15 credit hours of coursework and to complete or demonstrate competency equivalent to the completion of the 200-level course sequence in one foreign language.

Whereas the existing minor requires completion of Y219, the new minor replaces this with a requirement to complete I100 Introduction to International Studies and a requirement to complete one of four “windows on the world” courses (Y219, A104/304, H109 or G110). Both the I100 requirement and the one of four “windows on the world” course requirement correspond exactly to the new International Studies major. This change also serves to elevate and improve the interdisciplinary character of the minor by making it more interdisciplinary and less specifically focused on Political Science.

Whereas the existing minor requires 12 credit hours from at least three departments in a specific thematic or area focus, the new minor replaces this with 9 credits from at least 2 different departments that are selected from the International Studies major’s approved Area and Thematic concentrations course list. This change is made for two main reasons. First, since there are now 6 hours of required courses instead of 3, the reduction from 12 to 9 is made to keep the overall number of credit hours the same at 15. Second, this is deliberately a less complicated structure to make completion of the minor easier and hence potentially more attractive to potential students. Students in the International Studies major have to complete a 9 credit thematic concentration and a 9 credit area concentration. The advisory committee felt that students in the minor should have to take their credits from this same list of courses but that given the lower requirements for a minor, they should not have to complete specific area or thematic concentrations at this level. The need to complete specific concentrations serves as a significant deterrent to enrollment in the existing minor and we feel that a more flexible structure should help increase enrollment in the new minor.

This proposal was developed with and has the support of the International Studies advisory committee. Its adoption will greatly facilitate upgrading from the minor to the major for students who wish to do so.

Specific proposal

Students already enrolled in the existing International Studies minor should be given the option of either completing the existing minor or completing the new minor, whichever they prefer. Administration and advising will continue as today for both the old and the new minor. After the new minor outlined below is approved by faculty assembly, all subsequently enrolled students will have to complete the requirements for the new minor.

Broad Outline of Proposed International Studies Minor

- 15 credit hour interdisciplinary minor housed within the School of Liberal Arts.
- Core required course (3 credits): I100 Introduction to International Studies.
- 3 credit “Windows on the World” requirement from one of the following four courses: ANTH A104/A304 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology; GEOG G110 Introduction to Human Geography; HIST H109 Perspectives on the World Since 1800; POLS Y219 Introduction to International Relations.

- Foreign Language Competency: Completion of the second year of a modern foreign language (or the equivalent).
- Electives (9 credits): Any courses selected from the approved International Studies Area and Thematic concentrations course list as long as they come from at least 2 different departments.