GS FAQs

What is Global Studies?
- A multidisciplinary approach to complex global problems
- Our multidisciplinary lens in GS engages the study of history, government, economics, anthropology and the languages to understand global issues across regions of the world.

Why are we called Global Studies and not International Studies?
In our ever increasingly globalized world, we must not only continue to analyze issues between nations, but also examine cross border topics that involve relationships among non-state actors, such as multinational corporations, terrorists, etc., who play equally crucial roles. Also, it is important to differentiate this interdisciplinary major from “international relations”—a concentration and a subfield in political science.

Fulfilling Requirements:
What are the requirements?
- 5 core courses: EC 133, 134, GO131, HI 276, AY 112
- 3 culture and places and 3 theme courses
- Intermediate fluency (normally at SP or FR or GM 127 +2)
- Study abroad (unless student is international)
- Senior seminar
- A concentration if you do not have a relevant double major or minor
Do I need to fulfill all of my core before doing my culture and places and theme studies?

There are differing philosophies on sequencing your major. One is to get complete your core requirements in the first and second year. Certainly, don't want to be a senior, avid to pursue your own interests, but stuck in an introductory course. Sometimes, however, the scheduling doesn't work out. Keep in mind that faculty sabbaticals or leaves may change the normal schedule of a course. A class normally offered in the Spring, in the Fall or every other year, may be offered during a different semester or year. Remember it is your responsibility to fit everything in.

The second philosophy in sequencing your major is a mix of core and upper levels. Make progress on your core courses, but try to accelerate in the discipline or geographic area where you think you will likely concentrate. You don't want to be a first semester junior taking your first upper level government course if you are interested in international relations. Why? The next semester you go away, you are excited about your chosen course of study, you return to Colby but you are not able to pursue upper level work with the right professor because you haven't done much individual work with the faculty member. Faculty members don't like to assume leadership of senior projects when the student hasn't demonstrated success in relevant courses. This route suggests a mix of core courses and advanced courses where you have your pre-reqs in your sophomore year.

In addition, you may go on the job market in the fall of your senior year; if you return to campus and ask your professor for a letter, it is likely that the letter will not be able to address your ability to do advanced work. Rather, it will be based on that one introductory course you took with the professor. Even if you were terrific, there isn't much substantive to say! Building a course cluster in a specialization early allows you to add to your expertise in your senior year -- not begin it.

Which of these strategies you pursue often depends on when you declared the major, how many applicable courses you took in your first year and how many all college distribution requirements you have outstanding. There is no perfect path.

What is the difference between culture and places and theme?

A themes course would normally meet two or more of the following criteria:

- A course that focuses on more than one country
- A course that centrally engages relations or flows between nations
- A course that sharpens a thematic focus on a specific issue in globalization such as environment, gender or human rights. The global theoretical content of the course would ground more than half the course.

A cultures & places course develops a specific geographic and language focus. It normally:

- Engages deep cultural and historical learning about a country or an area
- Focus on a country or countries with a shared linguistic heritage

Can courses double count?

- Courses can count for cultures and places OR themes; some courses can count for EITHER but not BOTH. No double counting.
- Courses for the Concentration can (and should) count toward cultures and places or themes; the concentration is designed to encourage focus—you should design a major within your major
- Courses can double count toward Global Studies and another major or minor.

What if I get less than a C- in one of my courses?

- You must get at least a C- for the course to count toward the GS major. If you do not, you must retake the course. You may retake it at Colby or in a summer program if it is approved by the appropriate department chair (e.g., Economics for macro principles.) You can pick up the form for the department chair to sign at the registrar’s office.

Can I fulfill a course requirement in a summer program?

- Yes, if it is approved by the appropriate department and the GS director.
The Language Requirement

How do I fulfill my language requirement?

- You must take two courses beyond the 127 level; this will most frequently be 128 and 131 or 135. For Chinese and Japanese it is CN 321.

What if I am studying a language not offered at Colby such as Nepali, Korean or Hebrew?

- If you continue this study independently you may inquire through the director about certification through a test such as that offered at Harvard. It will be incumbent upon you to prove that you have passed through the equivalent of a 131 Colby level class. You may also reach the intermediate level in your study abroad or a summer course.

I came to Colby and began in Spanish 135. Do I have to take another language course?

- No. We are interested in assuring that you have a basic level of functional fluency. If you began at an advanced level we would count the first course or courses at or above 131. That is, if you only take 135 or only take 231, this course will count into your GPA for the GS major and it will satisfy your language requirement.

Should I take more than one language?

- In our globalizing world, this is a good idea if you have the time! If you think you are going to be in a career competing, for example, with Europeans, they may have more than two languages.

If I have a cultures and Places concentration, do I have to study a language of a nation in that region?

- Students must develop language skills relevant to their regional specialization.

Do upper level literature courses count toward culture and places studies?

- Absolutely; this is a great way to learn about a culture.

Concentrations

We require a concentration to encourage you to deepen your expertise in a given culture/places or theme interest; a relevant double major or minor accomplishes the same end.

Must I have a concentration?

Yes, majors must complete a concentration within the major UNLESS they have a double major or minor in:

- Economics
- French studies
- Environmental Studies
- German studies
- Spanish
- Italian
- Government
- East Asian studies
- Chinese
- Japanese

What are the concentrations focused on?

International Relations/Foreign Policy

International Relations is the study of conflict and cooperation between states and other political actors in an international environment in which there is no higher authority to regulate international behavior. It focuses on the interaction among states and between states and international institutions, transnational business enterprises, and non-state political actors, and on the tensions between state sovereignty and the forces of globalization. The core courses in Government are international relations courses that focus on how states and other political actors interact with each other either through security competition, through international laws and institutions, or through global markets. Interdisciplinary courses that complement this focus include international economics courses focusing on interactions between national economies or with international economic institutions, diplomatic and military history courses, international environmental policy courses that focus on institutions and negotiations, or other classes that focus on how political actors compete and cooperate with each other across borders.
Colby alums studying foreign policy and international relations have gone onto positions in the State Department, Congressional Offices, Time Magazine and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

International Economic Policy

International Economic Policy analyzes the flows of goods, services, capital and labor across borders. It develops an understanding and appreciation for economic interactions based on policies developed by sovereign states and multilateral organization as opposed to interactions among consumers and among firms within a country. It concerns itself with how production and investment is distributed across borders, global allocation of resources, and patterns of income distribution. As countries are more closely linked through economic ties, it analyzes the policies that nations and global institutions implement to address questions of fairness and stable growth.

International Economic Policy courses treat international economic interactions among countries as well as regional explorations, e.g. of Europe, the Americas, Africa or Asia. In addition to upper level economics courses, work in government that focuses on economic institutions and policy coordination, in anthropology analyzing cultural aspects of allocation and trade, in history chronicling global flows contribute to an understanding of international economic policy.

- The study of international economic policy leads to fields in international business and positions at policy think tanks such as the Peterson Institute for International Economics, IBM and the Poverty Action Lab.

Development Studies

Courses in development studies consider theories, issues and policies in the process of development. Students engage in the political, economic, historical and cultural study of improving the human condition in poor and middle income countries of the world. Development courses provide a comparative perspective on the long-term social, political, and economic changes that have accompanied industrialization and the growth in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Central concerns of development studies include understandings how processes of change impacts the distribution of wealth and opportunity both within and between nations as well as the environmental sustainability of growth over time.

- Alums have gone from development studies to positions at regional think tanks such as the InterAmerican Dialogue, the ONE campaign and the Peace Corps.

Human Rights/Social Justice

The study of human rights and social justice draws on multiple disciplines and perspectives to consider questions of freedom, peace, protection of the dignity and rights of human beings around the world. Thematic courses address human rights or social justice issues in terms of the historical or contemporary experiences of specific populations or identities; they address particular kinds of human rights or social justice struggles, movements, discourses and engage the development of policy and/or popular responses to address human rights or social justice concerns. The HR/SJ concentration considers the modes through which people around the world experience and respond to human rights abuses and other injustices as well as the conditions which obstruct or enable action (by groups or states) to pursue human rights and social justice. Global Studies students of HR/SJ are especially encouraged to take advantage of the residency of Colby's Oak fellow in International Human Rights each fall.

- Students of Human Rights and Social Justice have worked for NGOs such as Oxfam and Accion.

Do I have to take extra courses to fulfill the concentration?

Not necessarily, but probably a few. If, for example, you select an culture and places concentration such as Latin America, you might have 2 of the required 3 culture and places courses in Latin America, plus the study abroad experience where it is possible that you would have approved two additional courses. Your language would be Spanish and you would complete a senior seminar with a topic treating Latin America. In this case there are no additional courses-just a careful plan that targets your culture and places interest. You might, however, be interested in an international relations/foreign policy concentration. In addition to the government courses that would count for your policy requirement, if you didn't get foreign policy study credit for study abroad because you went on a language program, you would need two additional courses from the concentration list, and a senior seminar where the topic dealt with international relations/foreign policy. Alternatively, you might build on your policy interest in the selection of your study abroad program, and have the courses count toward your concentration.
Study Abroad

Where can I study abroad?
We work with you to identify the study abroad option that most closely matches your goals. Your study abroad location should fit your objectives. If you are interested in international relations you might find yourself in Geneva or in Jordan. For example student of international economy policy might study in Scotland or in Mexico. A development concentrator might choose to go to Senegal or Chile. Someone pursuing human rights/ social justice might focus on South Africa or Argentina. The key is to define your interests in consultation with your adviser.

What if I don’t have a 2.7 GPA for study abroad?
OCS rules state that you must have a 2.7 GPA to study abroad. If you are below the 2.7 but above 2.5 you may petition the Off Campus Study Advisory Committee to waive the 2.7 requirement. However, it is not automatic that you will be allowed to go; if your petition fails, you will be required to drop the global studies major unless (a) you completed a first year freshman program abroad or (b) you take an approved, 9 credit summer program.

How do I get my study abroad classes preapproved?
You will find preapproval form on the web page. You must submit these forms in paper copy with printed course descriptions appended. The director will review the forms and let you know the outcome. Please remember to put your email address and your campus phone number on the form to make it easier to contact you. Please do NOT email these forms to the director. The director is not a printer, and for your own protection in verifying graduation requirements, we need signed, paper copies in your file. You do NOT need to make an appointment to get your forms preapproved. Drop them off outside the director’s door. Give the director AT LEAST a week to turn the forms around. If you haven’t heard back from the director in two weeks, please send a gentle email reminder that you had dropped the forms off and you were hoping to hear whether the courses were approved.

What if I didn’t pre-approve my study abroad classes or if the class I approved changed?
You may post-approve classes, but you have assumed the risk if the class is not approved to count for either policy or area for the major. You will find the post-approval form on the web. You must supply a full course description, a syllabus (which often contains a description) and any material you believe will substantiate your case to the Director of the IS program (not your advisor). Please leave this in hard copy outside the director’s door.

Senior Seminar

What senior seminar will fulfill my concentration?
This will vary each year. Remember that the seminar need not be entirely dedicated to your concentration field. For example, one could have a concentration in Europe but still take the senior seminar in International Environmental Economics if the seminar paper was written on a topic with a substantially European perspective. Senior seminars in languages will satisfy those doing an area concentration or double count for those with a double major. For example, if you are a double major with French Studies or an GS major with a European concentration, the French senior seminar counts toward your global studies senior requirement.

Can I use an independent study (GS 491) to fulfill my senior seminar requirement?
Absolutely-but not without permission of the faculty member you would like to supervise your work. It is best if you email the likely supervisor over the summer before your senior year or stop by in the first days of the fall semester -- even if you hope to write the paper in the spring. The paper must be for 4 credits (or be a 2 credit independent combined with a 4 credit course); the length is up to the instructor but a rule of thumb is about 40-60 pages. The ideal supervisor is someone with whom you have completed prior course work. You should approach the potential supervisor with an independent study topic; better yet a 1-2 page proposal with bibliography is always impressive!

What is the 2 credit add-on option?
To increase the number of possible courses to fulfill your senior requirement, we allow you to attach a 2 credit independent study to a seminar-like class (one where there is active participation and student responsibility for work). This is done ONLY at the discretion of the instructor. Please consult with your instructor and the director of the GS program if you are considering this option. You would sign up for the 3-4 credit class plus two credits of GS 491. Economics majors writing their EC391 in the senior year may use the EC 391 if associated with a seminar like class (such as International Finance or Latin American Economic Policy.)

Can I do my senior seminar or my independent paper in my junior year?
Normally, no. The intent is for this to be a culminating experience. It is hard to culminate when you still have a year to go. However, there may be extenuating circumstances. For example, you want to write on the Middle East and Prof. Denoeux is on sabbatical your senior year. You may request in writing to the IS director a waiver of the requirement that the project take place in your senior year. Likewise, you may be intensely interested in Latin American politics and Prof. Fallaw’s senior seminar is the perfect capstone -- but he is going on leave your senior year. Again, petition. You can see that it is useful to look ahead and ask your favorite professor whether he or she will be offering the course you intend to use as your senior requirement in your senior year.
Advising

What if my advisor has gone away for the year or the semester?
The automatic default by the Registrar is to assign you to the director. Because of this, the advisor often has in excess of 60 advisees. If you would like individual attention, it is a good idea in the spring semester to ask your advisor if he or she is on leave in the following year. Your advisor may help you identify someone who would be a likely follow-up advisor.

How do I change my advisor?
The goal in Global Studies is to match you with an advisor with a similar field or area interest. This only works if you take initiative. If your interests have changed, if your advisor has left, or if you have developed through a class a closer relationship with a faculty member, please send by email a request to the director of the program to change your advisor. Indicate who you would like as your new advisor and why. Provide alternatives if possible. The director will contact the person on your behalf and report back to you if the person is able to take you on. Sometimes a faculty member already has too many advisees and you may have to go to a second choice. We will work to find a good match – but it is still up to you to build the relationship. Have you ever thought of taking your advisor to lunch when you have a long list of questions? It is free -- sign it to the Dean of Student’s office on a dining hall slip. Faculty like to eat!

I changed my advisor temporarily while the faculty member was on leave but my schedule still shows the temporary person. What do I do?
There is no automatic reverse on the registrar’s advising list. The Registrar’s office is patient enough with us in selecting your own advisor as most departments rely on the simpler but less satisfying A-M and N-Z distribution. Send an email to the director as in the FAQ above on changing your advisor and we will work to get you back with your original choice.

GPA

What counts into my global studies major GPA?
All courses that are requirements for the major, plus any additional courses you might take above the basic requirements counts toward your major GPA. That is, you can't select which ones you want to count in calculating your final GPA in your senior year.
What if I have a double major such as French -- does the additional literature course I take for my French major also count into my Global Studies GPA?
Yes. It would be unfair to pick and choose, so they all count.
What GPA in the major is needed for Distinction at Graduation?
3.5
What GPA in the major is necessary to be eligible to apply to write an honors thesis?
3.5
What GPA in the major is necessary to graduate at all?
2.0
What GPA is necessary for study abroad?
2.7; one may normally petition with a 2.5, but there is no guarantee of approval.

Honors

What is the Honors Program in the Global Studies major?
An honors program is available in which the student can pursue a year-long independent research project that also fulfills the seminar requirement; successful completion of this project may entitle the student to graduate “With Honors in Global Studies.”

If I want to write an honors thesis, when should I start thinking about it?
In your sophomore year. No kidding. An honors thesis should be the culmination of all your work over time. You need to have taken the courses that would support advanced work in your chosen field. If you have general ideas as to your topic, you can ideally do some preliminary work during your junior study abroad. Be in contact with your intended advisor about possible ideas; topics rarely emerge in their first round.

How do I proceed in pursuing the Honors Program?
To be eligible, you must have a grade point average of 3.5 or better in the major at the time of graduation and should submit a statement of intent to the program director by May 1 of the junior year. This is to allow you to begin reading and narrowing the topic in the following summer. In the fall, you will register for a semester-long workshop on writing honors proposals. The final deadline for submission of a completed honors thesis proposal is the first Friday in October. See the Global Studies Handbook (online) for further information about procedures, including mid-year evaluation and deadline for completion of the thesis. For more information, visit the Honors Program Policy Guidelines.

Is there funding for senior projects and honors theses?
Yes. Thanks to the generosity of alumni David P. Hunt there are funds available to support research during January of the senior year. This research normally takes place overseas, but you might use it to support archival work or interviews in a city such as DC. You must submit a proposal by the third Friday in September. You may also apply for up to $500 from the Dean of Faculty’s special student projects fund to support independent research. This, for example, might support a research trip to Washington (crashing on recent alums couches) to generate material or conduct interviews for your project.
**Does GS have funding for internships?**

No, GS does not have separate funding for internships. You are encouraged to consult the Career Center and the Goldfarb Center Funding sources. For work in Latin America, you should also become familiar with the Walker Grants administered through Latin American Studies; for work in Asia, the East Asia program has funding through the Freeman grants.

**More Questions?**

Email the Director of the Global Studies Department, Patrice Franko, at pmfranko@colby.edu.

We hope these FAQs helped you think more clearly about your Global Studies major!