Graduate School Forum Showcase:
Preparing for—or Preventing—a World in Conflict

Conflict takes many forms. Hot wars, cold wars, trade wars. Battles in cyberspace and for hearts and minds. Tensions between individuals and clashes of civilization. Conflict is as old as humanity, but peace is possible.

To prevent—or prevail in—a conflict, you must understand: who tips the balance between war and peace? How are circumstances changing on the ground? What is the role of technology in mitigating disagreements? In sparking them? How can communities rebuild in the aftermath? Are marginalized groups welcomed into the process to prevent future problems?

Training in international affairs and policy builds a critical foundation of expertise to recognize the underlying cultural, economic, social, and political forces at work in the world. It challenges students to develop communications, leadership, and teamwork skills. An interdisciplinary curriculum and a rich community of people with which to study bring differing ideas together. Graduates are distinguished by their flexibility and adaptability. They can separate facts from opinions.

As you begin your search for a master’s program, consider which programs help you establish a grounding in the past, prepare for the present, and get ready to adjust to the future. Look at how they bring emerging voices and a gender perspective into the conversation. Discover in what ways students challenge traditional ideas and formulate new ones. See how programs train students to engage stakeholders and create inclusive systems in order to solidify the building blocks of peace.

War may be politics by other means, but solutions can be found in the context of each situation. International affairs graduates master underlying principles of an ever-changing world to help prepare for a more peaceful future.

By Carmen Iezzi Mezzera
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Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (@apsiinfo)

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Mapping Global Insecurity

Preparing for today’s shifting global landscape requires conceptual knowledge, leadership skills, and exposure to real-world challenges. Maxwell’s Master of Arts in International Relations (MAIR) draws on leading social science departments, a top-ranked public administration program, interdisciplinary research centers, and faculty comprised of scholars and practitioners.

How is Maxwell’s professional program in IR distinctive?

Maxwell is both a public policy school and a college of social sciences and includes a broader range of disciplinary offerings than other professional schools, with built-in opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration.

The Mapping Global Insecurity Project, which I direct, is one example. Students and faculty have analyzed and mapped over 150 regions outside the government’s reach yet effectively governed by nonstate actors. We draw on economic geography, global supply chains, and social science literature on sovereignty to understand transnational criminal behavior. Students have written and updated eighty in-depth case studies, developing expertise that led to job offers at Interpol, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and NATO. The collected information comprises a novel data set that allows us to understand how transnational criminal groups map the world, leading to a fundamental rethinking of globalization and sovereignty.

Maxwell is uniquely positioned to take on this work. As an economist, I’m working alongside public policy and international affairs scholars while drawing on the expertise of political scientists, geographers, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and linguists, many of whom are regional experts. This and other interdisciplinary research is conducted within Maxwell’s Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, which is home to our regional centers. In addition, Maxwell sponsors or cosponsors eight other interdisciplinary centers, focused on topics such as environmental policy, public health, international security, and conflict resolution.

How does this scholarship advance toward applicability and, ultimately, careers?

First, many Maxwell professors are practitioners, with careers in international institutions. For example, I’ve worked on a bond-trading floor in London, heading research on emerging market sovereign risk for two investment banks as well as an IMF economist. Our faculty boasts a former NASA administrator, a secretary of the U.S. Navy, a director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and a deputy secretary of state. We always have one foot planted in the real world.

Second, a central part of our MAIR degree is a global internship experience; students have interned in Ghana, Israel, Geneva, Singapore, and Brussels. Program directors in these regions facilitate internships at UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations, government entities, and international business and trade organizations. MAIR students also engage in practitioner-focused coursework and internships through our Maxwell-in-Washington program with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. Students pursuing public diplomacy careers with our dual degrees in IR and public relations, offered with Syracuse’s prestigious Newhouse School, complete both a global internship and a semester in our Washington, DC, program.

Third, we emphasize leadership skills. MAIR students draw on management training provided by Maxwell’s MPA faculty, ranked number one in public management and leadership and number five in international global policy and administration by U.S. News.

Add the resources of Maxwell’s famously loyal alumni network, and you have it all: world-class interdisciplinary scholarship, professional leadership training, and networks around the world.
A Commitment to Peace Through Understanding

How do the graduate programs within Georgetown’s Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) address the changing nature of conflict in the world in 2018?

SFS, the first school in the United States dedicated to international affairs, was founded nearly one hundred years ago in the aftermath of World War I. In the words of our founder: “Unprepared as we were for war, we are resolved never to be unprepared for the peace.” This is our mission and it remains as relevant today. At the mission’s core is a commitment to peace through understanding. We believe that understanding global issues is fundamentally multidisciplinary. To that end, we offer eight degree programs: the broadly oriented Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS) Program, the Security Studies Program, the Global Human Development Program and five regional studies programs (Latin America, Asia, German and European Studies, Russia and Eurasian Studies, and Arab Studies). Each degree is built around an exploration of the history, politics, economics, and culture of global regions and problems. We are incorporating solutions to problems driven by technology. We frame these programs around a set of values promoting engaged service to the world, which we believe is essential to sustaining peace.

What other unique advantages does SFS have in making its graduate students more prepared to address conflict?

SFS has a faculty with an unparalleled understanding of the roots of conflict, but also many with experience in preventing and resolving conflicts. Madeleine Albright leads our students through crisis simulations. Bruce Hoffman and Dan Byman unpack the complexities of global terrorism. The last four directors for Asia on the National Security Council teach in our Asian Studies program. Our Global Human Development Program is led by USAID’s former chief economist. Our core faculty, supplemented by some of the most prominent practitioners in Washington, DC, work on solutions to global crises every day. Our students are engaged in analysis and practice in a way that virtually no other school can provide.

"Service" is not only part of our name, it is the core of our identity. It drives our faculty. It unites our students. And we are located in a city that is at the center of global service with multilateral organizations, think tanks, multi-national corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and, of course, U.S. government institutions. This enables our students to build service into their degrees through internships, sponsored fieldwork, and summer opportunities.

What specific skills are SFS students working on that would have been less common a generation ago in preparing to address conflict?

At the moment, what is most critical for our students is a skill that we must revive from a generation ago—the skill of diplomacy. Of course, we now have a greater emphasis on the technological drivers of change. We build solutions to global problems at the intersections of traditional disciplines, combining economics and security to understand fragile states, culture and politics to unpack global populism, or domestic and international risks to understand international migration. Yet, as critical as these new approaches are, we have never been more in need of a revival of the art of diplomacy to prevent and resolve conflict.
Applying Solutions to Policy Challenges Wherever They Exist—From Local to Global

What sets the Heinz College experience apart from other public policy programs?

In our Master of Science in Public Policy & Management (MSPPM) program, students acquire skills to solve complex problems wherever they exist. As the lines between issues that are considered global and local blur in the twenty-first century, our students are particularly well served.

Our curriculum has three layers: a technology layer, a data analytics layer, and a deployment layer (the skills of management, policy, and persuasion). More than ever, today’s changemakers need the technology layer to organize information, the data analytics skills to interpret the information and make decisions drawing on data, and the skills to deploy solutions that deliver maximum impact. That is what the Heinz College MSPPM degree delivers.

Our students acquire both quantitative and qualitative skills in coursework and through experiential learning—using those skills to solve real-world policy problems for clients in capstone projects. Some students choose the STEM data analytics pathway. Others apply to spend their second year in Washington, DC, as Heinz policy fellows. This select group works with nonprofits, international organizations, or the U.S. government. Many of these work experiences lead to full-time offers upon graduation.

What sets the Heinz faculty apart?

Students benefit from a world-class academic team of engaged and approachable leaders in their fields. We are deeply interdisciplinary and committed to solving societal problems. A great frame that captures the work of many faculty is striving for sustainable development, whether focused on reducing inequality, decreasing violence, addressing climate change, enabling decent work, improving health, reducing corruption, or advancing human rights and gender empowerment.

We are leaders on the development of smart cities and the future of work. This year, we launched the Block Center for Technology and Society, supporting research and convenings. In addition, I am leading an initiative focused on youth and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). We believe the SDGs have a particular appeal for today’s students who want to apply the skills they acquire at Heinz College to achieve the SDGs. These changemakers, whom I call Cohort 2030—the generation born roughly between 1980 and 2000—have the most to gain or lose from how the SDGs are implemented and are critical to their success.

Why Heinz, and why now?

Heinz College exists at the intersection of people, policy, and technology. We always have; the world has evolved in our direction.

Heinz College, as part of the larger Carnegie Mellon community, is a leader on the frontier of innovation and technology. As such, we are explicit in our understanding that technology can be disruptive in multiple ways. It has the power to increase societal conflict, including the disruption of democratic and other institutions or issues relating to privacy, but it can also play an instrumental role mitigating conflict, for example, by enabling rapid response to humanitarian disaster or helping to prevent mass atrocities.

Our students are emboldened by the opportunity to affect change around the issues they are passionate about as we head into the fourth industrial revolution, where technological innovation will be at the center of almost every policy issue and decision.
Preparing for International Service in a World of Instability

The Bush School of Government and Public Service was founded in 1997 to educate the next generation of leaders for careers in international affairs and public administration. President George H.W. Bush said that “public service is a noble calling,” and the Bush School’s mission reflects his values and ideals. The Bush School offers one- and two-year professional master’s degrees and several online certificates, as well as one of the lowest tuition and most generous scholarships among schools of foreign affairs in the United States.

How does the Bush School prepare students for dealing with the rise in international conflict and instability?

The next generation of leaders will face a more unstable world order as the post–World War II international system unravels, buffeted by ultra-nationalist, nativist, isolationist, and protectionist trends across the globe. Instability has manifested itself in increased great power rivalry, cyber and asymmetric warfare, violent non-state actors, state failure and civil conflict, and the greatest forced migration of people since World War II.

To prepare its students, the Bush School recently established research centers and programs focused on cyber policy and security, grand strategy among the great powers, gender in international affairs, pandemic preparedness, and the management of nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations. These programs are led by a blended faculty of leading academics with cutting-edge research and practitioners with extensive experience and networks in the military, intelligence, diplomacy, and international development.

Bush School faculty prepare students for the fast-paced professional environment in which they will work. Students learn to prepare interagency memos used to inform senior policymakers, as well as how to present briefings, through National Security Council crisis simulations, classroom group exercises, and capstone projects with U.S. government and international organization clients. Building on the applied approach, several capstone projects involve student travel abroad to undertake research in crisis areas.

The School’s curriculum develops crisis management skills from a diplomatic, humanitarian, intelligence, and military perspective, and the faculty emphasize evidence-based, rather than ideologically driven, research to inform student educational outcomes. Students then build that knowledge by taking internships in the U.S. intelligence community, Department of Defense, State Department, USAID, and UN agencies, among others. Upon graduation, more than 80 percent of Bush School students secure jobs in their career tracks.

In what ways does the Bush School collaborate with other Texas A&M University professional schools?

With over 60,000 students, Texas A&M is a tier-one research university with some of the highest ranked professional schools in the world—in business, agriculture, veterinary medicine, and engineering. Bush School students can take elective courses in those schools to supplement their studies, as well as pursue internships at on-campus research centers, such as the Borlaug Institute and the Center on Conflict and Development in the College of Agriculture, both funded in part by USAID. Together, faculty and students work on innovative policy and research.

Furthermore, the Bush School, Bush Foundation, and Texas A&M collaborate to bring in well-known scholars, journalists, and public figures to engage in conversations with our students about international issues and policy. Speakers have included Condoleezza Rice, Madeleine Albright, Robert Gates, John Negroponte, Anne Applebaum, Andy Card, George Weigel, and David Axelrod.
In the Nation’s Service and the Service of Humanity

What’s unique about the Woodrow Wilson School’s approach to teaching policy?

Our distinctive multidisciplinary course of study strikes a balance between theory and practice. Ninety full-time faculty members teach at the School, almost all of whom have dual appointments with other departments. Approximately forty-five visiting professors, lecturers, and practitioners from the world of public and international affairs also teach at the School. Our faculty conduct innovative research; provide policymakers, nonprofit organizations, and research centers with expert, nonpartisan policy analysis; and provide Woodrow Wilson undergraduate and graduate students with the analytical tools and in-depth knowledge needed to tackle important policy issues.

How do students apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world policy challenges?

We believe that learning extends beyond the classroom. We enrich formal coursework with almost-daily public lectures and informal talks with policymakers and advocates working on the important issues of the day. We send students all over the world to learn in the field—summer work for graduate students, policy workshops to strategically engage and analyze a policy issue on behalf of a real client, or field work to supplement formal studies. The result: Students are able to learn about any given policy topic from various vantage points.

How does the School support students’ career goals and objectives?

Many schools take the approach that students should invest in their own educations. At the Woodrow Wilson School, we take a different view—that the School should invest in the students. We provide generous financial aid for MPA, MPP, and PhD students as well as financial support for travel to complement policy workshops; financial support for language training; and financial support for summer internships. We provide ongoing career coaching and guidance, and our career services team is dedicated to helping launch Woodrow Wilson School graduate students after graduation and throughout their careers.

How does the School engage in foreign affairs and foreign policy?

For a school our size, we offer remarkable range in this regard. Our faculty and practitioners study international relations, politics, and economics, and our nineteen centers and programs focus on policy issues ranging from climate change and forced migration to security studies, health, and finance. We are a home for the study and debate of national and international policy and support a variety of educational, research, enrichment, and outreach activities. Opportunities abound for our students to gain the skills necessary to become the next generation of strategic thinkers and decision-makers, including learning directly from accomplished individuals. In addition to our ninety full-time tenured faculty, we regularly host visiting leaders and diplomats. Ambassadors Daniel C. Kurtzer and Ryan Crocker are with us now, both of whom have led crisis decision- and policy-making processes and both of whom now teach our students and engage with our community.
Skills and Expertise for National and Homeland Security Careers

How does the Master of International Affairs (MIA) program at Rockefeller College address increasing conflict and the changing nature of security in today’s world?

This is the most turbulent period in global politics since 9/11. Organizations need individuals with the skills and expertise to adapt to these changing circumstances. The international affairs faculty at Rockefeller College draw from their expertise both as cutting-edge researchers and as real-world practitioners. Our faculty have worked for the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. intelligence community, and the United Nations, and they bring these experiences into the classroom. For example, I worked for over a decade in the DoD and world-renowned think tanks prior to coming to Rockefeller College. I have briefed cabinet members and negotiated with foreign governments.

The MIA program requires all students to take my core course in global security, which examines political violence by nonstate actors as well as war between states. Students learn about suicide terrorism, drone warfare, nuclear weapons, and cybersecurity and apply that expertise to understand ongoing challenges with Syria, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Russia. Too often, programs focus on skills that professors had to learn to become professors and not enough on skills necessary to permit students to thrive in the workforce. I teach students information that I wish I had known when I started working in the Pentagon and skills such as memo writing and analytic briefing techniques that are necessary to succeed in consulting, think tanks, or public service.

How do Rockefeller’s international affairs students acquire skills and expertise required for a changing geopolitical landscape?

The MIA curriculum focuses on core competencies in international relations and policy analysis, economics, management, and quantitative methods. Students build on these core competencies as they concentrate their elective courses in areas such as global and homeland security, diplomacy and global governance, global public management, or international development administration. I oversee the Global and Homeland Security concentration. Many of our students who select this concentration also complete a certificate in cybersecurity offered by the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, taking advantage of University at Albany’s extensive course offerings in this in-demand area.

Why study Global and Homeland Security at Rockefeller College?

Our classes are not only led by faculty that combine rigorous research with policy relevance but are also filled with students with real-world experience confronting global and homeland security challenges. Our students have worked, interned, or completed capstone projects for the State Department, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, the New York Department of State, and the University at Albany’s National Center for Security and Preparedness, which develops and delivers first responder training to prepare for rapidly changing threats. Students may take courses in-person or through synchronous distance learning using web conferencing. This enables them to complete coursework when interning in other cities or traveling for work and take advantage of a broader array of internship and work opportunities.
Re-imagining New International Relations Programs in a New Geopolitical Reality

How are you preparing students to navigate changes in the geopolitical landscape?

We are going through an immense geopolitical change, and it represents both opportunities and challenges to Japan and established graduate programs—such as GSIR—located in the country. The geopolitical center of gravity has shifted away from the Atlantic to Asia, particularly in terms of China’s rise. Japan now sits at the center, rather than at the periphery, of global affairs. However, it challenges us to develop programs that go beyond the traditional Western-centric model based on the old geopolitical reality that had dominated the field of international relations for so many decades.

Ensuring the diversity of our faculty and students is a vital part of developing the program and intellectual community needed in this age of rapid change. In this regard, our great advantage is GSIR’s location in the center of Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and recently voted the world’s best city by influential travel magazine Travel + Leisure. Thanks to our location, GSIR has attracted top international students and faculty members, who now make up over two-thirds and one-fourth, respectively, of our vibrant intellectual community. This allows us to offer innovative programs that prepare students to navigate changes by acquiring diverse skills, perspectives, and experiences.

What does GSIR offer to students seeking an edge to their studies and their careers?

We have two English-based master’s degree programs: the Global Cooperation Program (GCP) and the Global and Japanese Perspective Program (GJP). GCP students gain a sound foundation in international cooperation through learning and discussions with our range of scholars and practitioners and by studying side-by-side with a growing number of international students from over thirty-two countries, many of whom are working policymakers from overseas, sponsored by prestigious Japanese government scholarship programs.

We offer academic courses that help students make better sense of the new geopolitical reality, such as global politics. We also offer more practical courses like professional training that provides hands-on training in international development in Asia and beyond from practitioners who have experience working for national, regional, and international organizations. GJP encourages students to learn from the experiences of Japan and other Asian countries, developing alternative and critical insights into global affairs going beyond the Western paradigms. Additionally, GJP’s courses and perspectives around culture, society, and media are featured more prominently than the traditional international relations programs. Such focus is crucial as the new geopolitical shift is driven not just by politics and economics but also—if not more—by cultural changes and global media technology.

Furthermore, GSIR is in the process of strengthening our dual master’s degree program, which offers qualified students the opportunity to study at two institutions—currently, six partner universities in Asia, Europe, and the United States—further enriching their skills and experiences. This program improves students’ ability to respond to changing situations and prepares them to work around the world. We believe we are adapting well to a new geopolitical reality and invite potential graduate students and colleagues to join us in this exciting new challenge!
BU’s Pardee School Takes “Global” Seriously

Adil Najam is the inaugural dean of the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies.

How did Boston University’s (BU) Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies come to be?
We became a school in 2014, thanks to a generous gift from BU alum Frederick S. Pardee; however, the school builds upon programs, departments, and centers that have existed for nearly half a century.

The Pardee School consists of BU’s former department of international relations, as well as centers and programs on regional and thematic studies. The result is a professional school of international affairs with nearly one thousand students, over a dozen Master of Arts (MA) options, and five undergraduate majors.

What does it mean to be global?
Although some might attack the idea of anything “global,” we take pride in our globalness. This begins with the recognition that many of the greatest challenges of our times can no longer be understood simply by understanding relations between nations—they can only be addressed amongst nations. Terrorism. Global trade and finance. Global climate change. Migration. Human rights. Cybersecurity. Technology. Energy. These issues still require an understanding of interstate relations, but they all now operate on a much broader global plane.

Employers around the world seek young professionals who can think at this global plane but are also able to connect the dots to regional and interstate dynamics—in fact, to local realities. The Pardee School is in the business of training such professionals.

How do you train students to connect these dots?
We believe that students cannot get to a global perspective without passing through regional and national. This is why we have centers and programs focusing on all the key regions of the world: Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and soon on the Middle East. These are in addition to established institutes on thematic issues: the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations, the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, and our Global Development Policy Center.

Our emphasis on language study—currently, twenty-two languages—and on student travel abroad is another way to empower our students to understand local realities and connect them to global dynamics. To support our students, the Pardee School has generous financial aid options and a dedicated fund for travel grants for graduate students to support their MA thesis research.

What goals do the faculty and students at the Pardee School share?
The goal of the Pardee School is to advance human progress. This idea informs everything we do. We are a school born in the twenty-first century, a time when old intellectual boundaries are being challenged. The intersections of security, social justice, environment, public health, culture and religion, democracy, and freedom cross borders with impunity. The Pardee School believes its deeply interdisciplinary approach will create a generation of leaders who can help address the great challenges of our times.
Making a World of Difference

How does your school approach the study of geopolitical conflict?

At the School of International Service (SIS), we have always relied on our greatest strength—diversity of thought and research. Our faculty of multidisciplinary experts includes political scientists, anthropologists, historians, geographers, diplomats, and practitioners. Through their translational and transformational research, they investigate the causes of conflict, identify opportunities to resolve them, and connect the global and the local.

How are you preparing students to navigate changes in the geopolitical landscape?

Because issues and challenges do not obey geopolitical borders, we provide students with strong academic foundations, practical skills, and opportunities to apply them outside the classroom. Our master’s students complete international practica on subject areas ranging from peacebuilding to cyber conflict in regions like the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Their opportunities for practice are as vast as the challenges that face our world, and they work for real-world clients in capstone experiences that jump-start their careers.

What do you consider the most important emerging areas in the study of international affairs?

The important emerging areas of study all reflect globalization and the fact that no country, however powerful, can go it alone. These areas, including climate change, national security, public health, and migration, often cut across traditional disciplines. Our response at SIS is to think and teach in similar cross-cutting ways.

The impact of climate change on global public health is a great example of the intersection of social justice, human rights, and national security. The U.S. military believes climate change is a security issue. We teach global environmental policy with the understanding that, yes, clean water and safety from damaging storms are important for public health and prosperity, but they’re also critical for security. If unaddressed, the effects of climate change, including competition for arable land and clean water, will exacerbate conflicts related to border security, the identities of nations, and social justice. Our Global Environmental Policy students translate their passions for justice, ecological well-being, and humane governance into careers addressing those concerns.

SIS students of foreign policy and security work with faculty known for their research on terrorism, cybersecurity, politics, diplomacy, and executive-legislative relations. We also have a strong history of innovation in the emerging area of intercultural communication as it relates to geopolitical conflict and cooperation. Our Master of Arts in International and Intercultural Communication prepares students for national and international leadership roles in public-cultural diplomacy initiatives, business and political negotiations, and education.

Finally, SIS, in partnership with American University’s College of Arts and Science, has staked out a leadership role in a critically important emerging area of study—antiracist policies and movements around the world. Under the visionary leadership of Professor Ibram X. Kendi, our Antiracist Research and Policy Center produces knowledge for change’s sake. Determined researchers and policy experts study racial inequality, recommend policy correctives, and engage in campaigns of change.

SIS is a unique place. We attract service-minded leaders who understand that, in today’s world, a win-lose scenario produces no true winners. Our students and alumni will always strive for the win-win that acknowledges the concerns and human dignity of all.
Maximize Your Effectiveness in the Changing Global Business Environment

How does the Oxford Diploma in Global Business relate to the current geopolitical environment?
The Oxford Diploma in Global Business is more than a business program. It connects the challenges of leading organizations with the wider global environment. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the program looks in-depth at the themes of global strategy, managing risk and reputation, corporate diplomacy, and the challenges of business in emerging markets. Students are equipped with the knowledge and tools to manage organizations through the complexity and volatility that is increasingly a feature of the global landscape.

Who is the program for?
The diploma is a part-time, masters-level qualification for experienced professionals with at least five years’ work experience who are working full-time. It is delivered in Oxford in four modules, each lasting four days, over one year. The flexible format allows a truly global class, with most students flying in and out of the United Kingdom for each module. The diversity in the classroom ensures a lively debate, challenging assumptions and developing critical thinking, while creating an outstanding global network of game changers. The program offers a specialized pathway to the Oxford Executive MBA.

What does a typical global business class look like?
Our class is made up of experienced professionals who are either working in an international role or looking to take up a position with an international focus.

We would expect to see around thirty nationalities among the fifty students each year, with ages ranging from twenty-six to sixty. Students would typically be working in over twenty different sectors, in a diverse range of positions from manager to CEO-level. Each year, several students join the program from nonbusiness roles, working for nongovernmental or intergovernmental organizations. Oxford Saïd is committed to increasing the economic participation and influence of women. As a result, we offer three partial scholarships for women to try to increase the share of women on the program, which has recently averaged 35 percent.

Why consider graduate study at Oxford?
For over eight centuries, leaders from across the world and from all spheres have come to Oxford to study, to intellectually recharge, and to engage in important discussions. The remarkable community at Saïd Business School continues this tradition. Our community is unique, with no single viewpoint, geography, or sector being dominant. We enrich our perspective and impact through the convening power of Oxford, which brings heads of state, CEOs, Nobel laureates, brilliant young scholars, social entrepreneurs, senior policymakers, inventors, corporate recruiters, and many more to Oxford.

The community in Oxford is everything you would expect of a world-class business school: challenging yet collegial, thoughtful but ready for action, ambitious yet principled, rigorous yet fun, and very international.

We develop people who can analyze complex problems, devise pragmatic solutions, and implement them working as part of a team. This makes our alumni some of the most desirable recruits for the world’s leading organizations.
Outside the Beltway, Outside the Box: Inclusivity and Sustainability in International Affairs

How are you preparing students to navigate changes in the geopolitical landscape?

We all know these are tumultuous times; yet, there are dangers in becoming prisoners of the moment. Our job is not just to prepare our students for the jobs they will be seeking in the next few years but to provide them also with enduring paradigms that can guide their thinking for the next fifty. For that reason, we benefit from faculty tackling next-generation security concerns like autonomous weapons to those wrangling with the same ethical dilemmas faced by the ancient Greeks.

What research projects are you most excited about at the moment?

As the incoming director of the Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security and Diplomacy, I’m lucky to have a bird’s-eye view of some really cutting-edge research. For the past two years, our faculty have been working on a Carnegie Corporation grant that’s been generating new insights into how inclusive approaches to peacebuilding and governance can reduce violence in a range of conflict-affected contexts. We’re really proud that this project has involved so many PhD and master’s degree student researchers—they’ve contributed valuable insights and developed skills that will set them apart from the competition.

I’m also incredibly proud of our Inclusive Global Leadership Initiative (IGLI), which is highlighting the role that women and other underrepresented groups play in leading nonviolent movements for social change around the world. IGLI also brings the next generation of leaders in this space to Denver for training and community building.

What is unique about the programs offered at the Korbel School?

Korbel offers a variety of degree programs that can be combined with certificate programs to really tailor the knowledge and skill base to students’ interests. For example, our Global Financial Trade and Economic Integration (GFTEI) program is truly one-of-a-kind, giving students a solid foundation in international economics and political economy while providing them with an ethical framework in which to understand the tradeoffs that come with deepening economic integration. As our challenges change, we’re adapting our curriculum and course offerings to keep pace. This year, we’re introducing a certificate in Global Environmental Change and Adaptation (GECA), which will help prepare students for careers promoting sustainable solutions to our natural resource challenges in government, international organizations, and the private sector.

Why study in Denver for a career in foreign affairs?

There’s really something to the perspective you glean from studying at the foot of the Rockies. Former students always tell me one of the things they loved about Korbel was that it was the last time they felt like they could really dig into a question or topic without the daily distractions that come from the hustle and bustle of the Beltway. Denver is a wonderful environment in which to engage in deep study: Students love the lifestyle and all the natural beauty our environment provides. As Denver blossoms into a truly international city, it offers an increasingly robust job market for our graduates as well.
Preparing Tomorrow’s Leaders for the Future of Global Conflicts

How does the IE School of Global and Public Affairs (IEGPA) account for the ever-changing nature of conflict and conflict resolution and of the actors involved?

The nature of conflict and peacebuilding are in constant motion. As seen in the Syrian conflict, social media has altered how organizations recruit fighters and strive for legitimacy. Recent events in sub-Saharan Africa highlight the new role of climate change and environmental scarcity as root causes of civil disorder. New forms of unrest are emerging not only in the developing world but also in the United States and European Union, where radical political movements and breakaway regions threaten the post–World War II status quo. To account for this evolving and increasingly complex panorama, faculty and program directors at IEGPA engage in innovation and renovation of our academic programs and curricula. Our academic faculty, with the values of change and adaptation, are committed to bridging the gap between academic research and the applied world of geopolitics and public policy.

How is IEGPA adjusting its teaching to account for these changes?

How can we address the conflict in Syria without a drastic reconsideration of European policy on asylum and refugees? How do we re-integrate fighters into “post-conflict” society when they’re from all corners of the globe? Beyond re-integrating fighters, how can we better heal the physical and psychological wounds of conflict’s innocent victims and bystanders? The answers often lie at the intersection of sectors all too often studied in isolation: the international and domestic, the public and private, the strategic and operational. At IEGPA, our programs emphasize the hard and soft skills necessary to transcend these narrow sectoral distinctions and design integrative solutions to today’s conflict problems and processes. Alongside traditional courses in conflict resolution, geopolitics, and area studies, our programs include courses in new technologies, project design and management, adaptive leadership, and policy innovation. We believe this entrepreneurial, transcendental approach to the study of international affairs unlocks students’ potential as global problem solvers and impact makers.

How are you considering technology’s role in mitigating or sparking conflict?

New technologies are at the heart of what we do at IEGPA. The Center for the Governance of Change, one of the school’s affiliated research and learning centers, is dedicated to understanding how new technologies are changing economics, politics, and society and how governance institutions and public policies must respond to these technological revolutions. In no area is the role of new technologies more relevant than conflict and peacebuilding—they have fundamentally altered how conflicting groups recruit combatants, manage organizations, and strive for legitimacy. From the use of cell phones in sub-Saharan Africa, to Russia-funded Twitter trolls in American and European elections, to the use of social media by the Islamic State, research is emerging that highlights technology’s role in facilitating new forms of conflict. However, we at IEGPA also believe that new media have a place in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Social media and virtual reality platforms provide game-changing ways of reaching people across geographic, social, and ideological divides. Properly mobilized and in the right hands, new technologies can be valuable tools for conflict resolvers.
Could you tell us about the curriculum at your school in relation to conflict studies?

Conflict studies is at the heart of what we teach at the Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS). Through our modules and research, conflict studies, from a theoretical and historical perspective as well as via contemporary case studies, plays a major role in our teaching. Students do this via our master’s degree in international conflict and security or enhancing another degree at BSIS with elements from the conflict subject area. Our classes span a large spectrum of conflict-related themes, such as law of armed conflict, negotiation and mediation, critical approaches to security, and theories of conflict and violence. Our teaching takes an international view but focuses on key regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, Russia and Ukraine, or the Middle East. Students are encouraged to develop their own regional interests—be it the Korean peninsula or Afghanistan—and how conflict studies fit with the wider international relations issues.

How are conflict studies taught at BSIS?

Our students are encouraged to come at the topic of conflict from different angles and perspectives—studying conflict in the context of law, development, migration, or human rights. This interdisciplinary focus provides students with the ability to think about how conflict is interlinked with other international issues, such as the migration crisis or human rights violations, or via the legal ramifications of conflict events. Negotiation and mediation is one of our most popular classes. This practical, hands-on class informs students about the complexity of managing negotiations and is delivered by a global expert in conflict resolution.

We also have a PhD degree in conflict, where students take advantage of the expertise of academic staff as well as being part of the wider Conflict Analysis Research Centre.

How do you account for the role of technology in global conflicts?

Conflict and technology is a rapidly developing area of study and one which our students find fascinating. We aim to incorporate the role of technology into our teaching, but we also did this with our latest international conference hosted at BSIS. At the conference, Digital Disruptions: How Technology Changes Our Reality, a range of panel sessions were covered on subjects such as technology regulations, the role of technology on political extremism, and the ever increasing role of governments on shaping online narratives. The role of technology is likely to become a key component of our teaching in the future—for example, whether technology can lead us to world peace or make conflicts more complicated.

How do you account for emerging roles in addressing conflict, for example, applying a gender lens?

We do this in many ways, but one example is within our gender and conflicts module, where we look at the differing impact of conflict on women and on men and the diverging meanings of conflict and security. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, and norms that affect how both males and females or, rather, how masculinities and femininities are defined or understood within society. We also expand this to look at gender within development and migration issues, which often run parallel with conflict issues.
You came to the NYUSPS Center for Global Affairs (CGA) from a practitioner’s background, having worked globally with the United Nations, the military, and the private sector. What struck you most about the program at CGA?

What stood out to me was CGA's truly interdisciplinary approach to global affairs. The world is a complex place, and CGA's Master of Science in Global Affairs (MSGA) ensures that students have the most effective tools to make sense of it. Students can choose from eight concentrations, taught by experienced scholar-practitioners—International Relations Global Futures, Global Economy, Human Rights and International Law, Peacebuilding, International Development and Humanitarian Assistance, Environment/Energy Policy, Global Gender Studies, and Transnational Security. Offering an array of courses—both core and elective—means that MSGA graduates are extremely capable of looking at global conflict through a number of lenses.

In addition, the MSGA program is unique in its real-world focus. The topics discussed reflect the dynamic nature of today’s global conflicts. The courses offered are constantly being tweaked so that they remain grounded in the essential foundational concepts while addressing what’s happening in the world around us. Also, CGA affords students a truly immersive educational experience that goes well beyond the classroom walls. This includes a dizzying selection of guest speakers and public events; opportunities for internships and consultancies with organizations in the private, public, voluntary, and international sectors; and noncredit courses aimed at enriching a student’s professional development. Then, there are the many CGA global field intensives, which take place each year. These afford students the opportunity to learn about, and travel to, countries around the world. Global field intensives focus on current issues and challenges, and are led by faculty members and facilitated by academics, and government and business officials. This year, students explored India, Taiwan, Bolivia, the United Arab Emirates, and Tanzania—truly remarkable learning opportunities that allowed them to better understand the sources of, and potential solutions to, a world in conflict.

I should mention that CGA is located in the heart of a global city—New York City. It is just next to Wall Street and the Financial District and is minutes away from the United Nations, the Council for Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, and the International Peace Institute.

How does the MSGA degree prepare students for life in a world of conflict?

The program’s real-world focus empowers students to look at all possibilities and to see connections, allowing them to break down artificial silos. This prepares them to be successful in jobs that combine a security approach to threats and risks, with a private sector eye for value creation. Moreover, CGA students benefit from a robust and rigorous approach to analytical skills acquisition and application. This enables them to make immediate contributions to evidence-based policy analysis and development wherever they go. Finally, CGA has cultivated a powerful professional network that its graduates can tap into. Among its board members, adjunct faculty members, and alumni are well-placed, influential women and men who are concerned about the potential for conflict and who go out of their way to provide leadership and stewardship for the next generation.
Preparing Students to Navigate Changes in the Geopolitical Landscape

Why study geopolitics in Singapore?
Whether as host to the recent U.S. President Donald J. Trump—North Korean leader Kim Jong-un summit on denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, the Presidents Xi Jinping—Ma Ying-jeou meeting of 2015 to improve China-Taiwan relations, or the venue of the annual Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore offers an unmatched vantage point to view and interpret the changing geopolitics of Asia and the world.

Located in the heart of where East meets West, Singapore’s reputation as an honest broker and its penchant for a rules-based regional-global order makes it an ideal place for students and faculty to debate the meaning and implications of shifting geopolitics. The cosmopolitan student body and faculty ensure an exciting but dispassionate approach to studying change, reflecting a true diversity of opinions while striving to incorporate Asian perspectives.

The National University of Singapore’s reputation for academic excellence—ranked number one in Asia and number eleven in the world by the 2018 QS World University Rankings—continues to draw talented students and an accomplished faculty from all over the world to the school.

What will the students gain from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSSP)?
Living in Singapore among an unmatched cosmopolitan student body, guided by a distinguished faculty with their fingers firmly on the region’s pulse, LKYSSP students obtain the analytical tools and interpretive sensibilities to answer questions such as: Are we in the midst of a power transition, with rising powers such as China competing with the established power, the United States, to shape rules of the game in Asia and beyond? What are the chances of a U.S.-China trade war, and of such a war spilling over to military conflict in, say, the South China Sea? What roles can and should the European Union (EU), Japan, India, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) play in this evolving economic and security landscape?

With deep expertise on China, India, the United States, the Koreas, Japan, and ASEAN, our faculty is committed to delivering an outstanding education in international affairs. Thus, the National University of Singapore-Master in International Affairs experience enhances the global competitiveness of those who want to make a difference.

Who should study at the school?
We welcome students who share our passion for understanding the seismic changes happening in Asia and who are prepared for an immersive experience of living in Asia as a way to understand these developments. Our students prize forming new networks with Asia’s young policy and thought leaders, and they aspire to making a positive difference through an international career in policy, business, nongovernmental organizations, consulting, policy-relevant research, and academia.

Students keen on exploring future career opportunities through internships will also find a supportive environment at LKYSSP. The World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the Global Environment Institute in Beijing, the EU Delegation to Singapore, and the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue are among some of the organizations where our students have secured internships.

For over a decade, we have trained students from Asia and other parts of the world to be the best they can be through our world-class public policy education.
Tai Ming Cheung
Director, UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation
Professor, UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy

View from the Pacific: An Innovative Look at Conflict and Security

What is the relationship of the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) to international security and defense?

Several prominent trends are shaping the contours of the landscape: the challenge of great powers, especially China, to the existing U.S.-dominated security order, the impact of geo-economic factors, and the influence of technology and innovation on state capacity. GPS has substantial academic expertise in these areas that allow our students to prepare for the critical security challenges over the next five to fifteen years and even longer. Besides scholars engaged in the latest cutting-edge research on the implications of cybersecurity, innovation, and the power transitions in the global order, GPS has former senior military officers providing a practitioner’s perspective to how to manage the complex dynamics between military power, diplomacy, geopolitics, and national power. This allows GPS to cater to the needs of our diverse pool of security-track students, which include a mix of civilian students and military personnel from the local San Diego community, as well as from elsewhere in the world.

How does GPS see the importance of technology in studying security and conflict?

GPS sees science, technology, and innovation as essential in understanding contemporary security and conflict from the level of nonstate actors, such as terrorist groups, to military competition involving advanced industrial powers, such as the United States, China, and Russia. Our courses examine many of the grand security questions facing the world now and in the years to come. Is cybersecurity a game-changer in how future wars will be waged? Will the United States lose its global lead in defense innovation anytime soon? Is the world in the midst of a global technological revolution that will profoundly reshape how conflict takes place and how states prepare for war? Combining technological knowhow with policy expertise is a must-have skill set for tomorrow’s security professional.

How do GPS students get involved in the work that the UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) is doing around the world?

One prime example of how students can get firsthand working experience on some of the security issues they study is through the numerous research and engagement programs run by IGCC, which is based at GPS. IGCC manages an annual Track 1.5 dialogue addressing security issues in Northeast Asia, especially North Korea’s efforts to become a nuclear weapons state. GPS students prepare and take part in the dialogue that offers unique, firsthand insights into how international meetings on complex security challenges are conducted. Other IGCC programs include the study of China’s technological rise, great power competition, nuclear nonproliferation, and defense transparency.

What types of nontraditional, security-related careers are you seeing GPS students go into?

As the study of international security becomes increasingly broad and nontraditional, GPS students are well prepared to take advantage of new opportunities. While GPS has a strong track record in helping students gain access to positions in traditional security career paths, such as the military, diplomatic corps, defense contractors, security think tanks, and working for government, we also place graduates in nontraditional careers. They include political and business risk management for multinational corporations, international humanitarian groups, food security research, refugee resettlement, business development with defense companies, and threat analysis with cybersecurity outfits.
Matthew Levinger
Research Professor of International Affairs
Master of International Policy and Practice Program Director
National Security Studies Program Director

Master of International Policy and Practice: A Mid-Career Boost for International Affairs Professionals

How has working at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) informed how you teach conflict resolution at the Elliott School of International Affairs?

At the Holocaust Museum and USIP, I worked with a diverse range of international affairs (IA) professionals to teach skills and design strategies for preventing and resolving deadly violence. A key imperative was to translate abstract academic research findings into actionable insights for practitioners working in conflict settings.

At the Elliott School, I teach graduate students and senior U.S. government officials about international conflict resolution and national security leadership. With both audiences, I emphasize that effective leadership depends on forging a shared sense of purpose through narratives that help diverse constituencies find common ground. I continue to strive to combine intellectual rigor, clarity, and pragmatism.

A challenge of working on genocide prevention and conflict resolution is that these objectives are often viewed as admirable but unrealistic, so it is difficult to marshal sustained and strategic action to achieve them. At the Holocaust Museum, I helped launch the Genocide Prevention Task Force, a high-level panel chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen. The task force declared genocide prevention a “core U.S. national security interest” and presented practical policy recommendations, since adopted by the Obama and Trump administrations. With my Elliott School students, I stress the need to aim high and follow the courage of one’s convictions, even if progress is difficult and halting.

How do Elliott School students acquire the practical, ethical, and leadership skills for a changing world?

In our increasingly complex and volatile world, it is important to lead horizontally as well as hierarchically. Promoting transformational change requires the capacity to listen attentively, to communicate effectively across cultures, and to identify opportunities for constructive collaboration. Elliott School students develop these skills in the classroom through our extensive professional skills curriculum and by studying with some of the world’s most distinguished IA practitioners. Our global capstone courses offer students the chance to consult for major global organizations, analyzing and proposing solutions to pressing leadership challenges. Because most Elliott School classes meet in the evenings in Washington, DC, many of our students also work full-time or part-time and have the opportunity to put these skills into practice in their professional lives.

What makes the students, faculty, and community at George Washington University unique?

As the realtors say, “Location, location, location.” Our physical location is blocks from the White House, State Department, World Bank, and leading think tanks and nongovernmental organizations. Our students have access to unparalleled resources and opportunities to enhance their IA knowledge in an applied setting, and the Elliott School draws on the expertise of accomplished practitioners both in the classroom and in the more than 350 public events it hosts each year. Equally distinctive is our figurative location at the intersection between academia and practice. The Elliott School is a multidisciplinary institution that is home to some of the world’s most influential political scientists, economists, historians, and anthropologists, in addition to current and former policymakers with a wealth of experience in government and international institutions.

Elliott School of International Affairs
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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Preparing the Next Generation of Innovative Global Policy Leaders

Stanford’s Ford Dorsey Program in International Policy (MIP) recently redesigned its curriculum. What was the impetus for this change?

We are firm believers that the program and its curriculum should be responsive with the ever-changing global landscape. We reevaluate our curriculum every ten years to make sure students are ready for leadership roles where they will engineer policy and spur innovation. In particular, our new curriculum reflects technology’s growing role in all dimensions of international affairs. It also provides more original learning experiences, including lab projects, interactive case method teaching, and mentorship from Stanford’s distinguished faculty. Under the program, senior faculty teach almost all courses in core and gateways courses for our new specialization tracks.

What are the highlights of this redesigned program?

One of the most exciting updates to the curriculum is our redesigned capstone practicum, Engineering Policy Change, which students take in their second year. The practicum, which is taught by Francis Fukuyama and Jeremy Weinstein, partners small student teams with real-world organizations to tackle pressing policy problems. Students also have opportunities to assist with policy-relevant research within the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI). Additionally, the curriculum provides flexibility—students can pursue their academic interests in a truly interdisciplinary way, including opportunities with Stanford Graduate School of Business, the Law School, and the design school.

How does MIP prepare tomorrow’s leaders to deal with the changing nature of conflict and peaceful resolution?

MIP students graduate with expertise in quantitative analysis, decision-making, and research methodology, among other skills that contemporary policymakers need. Since students can take courses in different departments and schools, many augment their policy skills with finance, computer science, management, language, and other fields. This interdisciplinary and collaborative environment gives our students the ability to translate between different fields and perspectives that they will encounter in their future careers.

Keeping this ever-changing geopolitical landscape in mind, how does MIP offer students relevant networking and career opportunities?

Stanford and FSI are home to world-renowned scholars and researchers with incredible policy experience, from former ambassadors to key players in Silicon Valley. We have several faculty at FSI who have the rare combination of being leaders in their academic fields and experienced practitioners. FSI regularly hosts policymakers from around the globe and often arranges small, intimate meetings for our students. In addition, our students participate in site visits to gain exposure to policy and management departments within some of Silicon Valley’s most exciting enterprises.

Because MIP is a small and collaborative program, we have strong ties to our alumni, who routinely participate in career panels and visits and provide introductions, internships, and career opportunities for current students. Pragmatic real-world experience, combined with networking opportunities from different sectors and industries, equip our students to become leaders in international policy.
Expertise Isn’t Dead: Skills, Knowledge, and Public Service in Turbulent Times

Joshua Busby is the author of the recent Foreign Affairs article “Warming World: Why Climate Change Matters More Than Anything Else” (July/August 2018).

What is your program’s philosophy about teaching and world affairs?

While scholars fear that expert opinion has been devalued, skilled practitioners are needed now more than ever before. The next generation of policy professionals could define whether humanity rises to the many challenges facing the world. That is why our training mission is so important.

How is the LBJ School preparing for both old and new challenges?

Our first semester course in the Master of Global Policy Studies program, the Nature of the International System, provides students with a conceptual architecture to understand enduring features of world politics like international conflict, competition, and cooperation. We also bring in new topics such as climate change, pandemics, and disruptive nationalism.

Our faculty cover a range of these newer issues. I teach environmental security and courses on global environmental and health governance. My faculty colleagues are leading scholars in areas such as international aid evaluation and transparency, food security, China in the developing world, civil conflict, and Asian security and missile defense.

With the return of geopolitical tensions, we are also a leading school for grand strategy and the role of history. Scholars and practitioners bring rich historical knowledge and practical experience to courses like Policymaking in the Global Age and Foreign Policy Strategy and Decision-Making.

Students also participate in a year-long research course for a professional client, which often involves some travel. For example, I partnered with the Congressional Research Service on a course on global wildlife conservation, sending students to Washington, DC, China, and Tanzania.

Does the LBJ School have specific programs and centers?

We are affiliated with world-class centers of excellence and innovative programs, including the Strauss Center for International Security and Law, the Clements Center for National Security, and Innovations for Peace and Development (IPD).

The Straus and Clements Centers publish the Texas National Security Review in partnership with the website War on the Rocks. Students can get involved. The two centers also host the Intelligence Studies Project. The CIA recently selected the LBJ School as the only policy school in the nation to host a visiting intelligence officer. The Cybersecurity Studies program at Strauss also cross-trains students in policy and law. Furthermore, Strauss hosts the Mexico Security Initiative, which examines cutting-edge policy issues including the experience of Central American migrants.

IPD, a multidisciplinary program, has done pathbreaking work on open data, involving dozens of students to bring innovative methods like GIS to bear on conflict, foreign aid, and poverty alleviation.

We recently opened the new China Policy Center, a laboratory for the study of contemporary U.S.-China relations.

The LBJ Washington Center also offers an eighteen-month course of accelerated study and work focused on both domestic and international federal policymaking.

Why should students come to Austin?

Tuition is affordable. Austin is justly famous for its year-round outdoor culture, lakes, start-up and music scenes, booming economy, and much more. A border state, Texas is center stage for many of the world’s high-stakes issues such as trade, immigration, energy, and the environment. We share the vast resources of UT Austin, a Tier I public research university, and a presidential library. High-level officials and leading scholars from around the globe make us a destination for important dialogue.
Dyan Mazurana
Associate Research Professor
Co-Director of Gender Analysis in International Studies
and Women’s Leadership Program
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Tufts University

#MeToo in International Relations: Researching Gender Through a Global Lens

Dyan Mazurana, associate research professor and co-director of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy’s Gender Analysis in International Studies and Women’s Leadership Program, is an expert in gender-based crimes committed during armed conflict. She consults with a number of governments, UN agencies, and nongovernmental organizations on how to tackle these tough problems.

You direct The Fletcher School’s Gender Analysis in International Studies program. Why is it important to incorporate gender into an international affairs education?

As I tell my students, “Anytime humans are involved, it’s always deeply gendered.” Fletcher students learn that gender plays a role in everything from refugee crises, peace operations, and international justice to the consequences of man-made crises and natural disasters.

I’m proud to say that Fletcher’s strong commitment to including gender analysis in its programming has made it one of the leading schools to study gender and international affairs at the master’s and doctoral levels. These courses are popular among male and female students.

To top it off, we’re not only “walking the walk” but “talking the talk.” Fletcher has among the highest percentages of women faculty in tenure and tenure-track positions and other senior-level faculty positions, of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs member schools.

In addition to teaching, you’re also an active researcher, most recently looking at sexual harassment and assault among humanitarian aid workers. Tell us about your findings.

We looked at over two thousand surveys of aid workers and interviewed many who were survivors of sexual harassment and assault. We thought we’d find that most of those who were assaulting workers were members of armed groups or civilians in lawless areas. In truth, however, it was mostly the aid workers’ own colleagues, often men in supervisory positions or acting as security officers, and carried out in aid workers’ compounds. Women were the primary targets, but LGBTQ workers were also vulnerable.

As with recent reports of sexual harassment and assault in the entertainment industry, aid workers who tried to report these incidents often faced retaliation. In most cases, internal reporting results in the complaint crossing the desk of the upper-level person who perpetrated it or those who support him.

However, international media coverage of our findings has helped bring increased pressure on governmental agencies and the United Nations to do more to protect aid workers by strengthening reporting and investigation of sexual harassment and assault. That gives me hope.

Which students thrive at The Fletcher School?

Our students, despite hearing about these problems, are not deterred from their commitment to help make the world a better, safer place. They’re not shrinking violets. Some students make a career choice that will take them to trying environments, but we make sure they’re equipped with the skills needed to address global challenges across the sectors of government, business, and civil society. Students come to Fletcher first and foremost to learn, then to do. Fletcher attracts people of action, and we have a track record for graduating those who go on to positively impact the world. It is extremely rewarding and exciting to watch our graduates tackle new and important challenges each year.
Preparing for a World in Conflict

With shifts in political dynamics around the world, how can global leadership students prepare for a world in conflict?

Many of the sources of conflict today arise from a lack of understanding of different cultures and the importance of global business. Thunderbird was founded based on the concept that if people of different nations do business together, they will be less likely to fight. “Borders frequented by trade seldom need soldiers” is how Dr. William Schurz, Thunderbird’s second president, eloquently expressed this. In an interconnected world, I believe a more altruistic attitude, open-mindedness, and ability to see through others’ lens can lead to a reduction in global conflict. Global leadership students need to learn effective ways to manage people with different cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking. They need to possess a global mindset, be aware of political and business environments in different regions of the world, and be prepared for the technological disruption in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and internet, which will change the world in every imaginable way.

How can “business done right”—ethical management and leadership—help bring countries and economies together?

Currently, many nations are experiencing an upsurge of nativism that blames others for the economic problems at home. This has resulted in unnecessary tensions and conflicts and is very inefficient and costly from an international economics standpoint. To bring countries and economies together, nations need to recognize that the biggest issue facing the world today is advances in technology and the associated disruption, not globalism. The technological disruption requires joint solutions that span across the globe. So, businesses and governments need to understand the importance of cross-border collaboration. It’s only through cooperation and mutual understanding that sustainable solutions could be created to address the challenges ahead.

How does Thunderbird’s curriculum prepare students to enter a world where global connections are critical to “getting the job done,” but political pressures could make that challenging?

Thunderbird’s curriculum is created based on the mission of educating global leaders who create sustainable prosperity worldwide. We not only educate our students on global leadership skills but also instill them with the sense of responsibilities to act ethically on every decision. Our curriculum exposes our students to global political economy and regional business environments and prepares them to face the challenges of doing business across borders. Students learn the intricacies of foreign relations and how to be sensitive to political tensions among the countries where they do business. Our curriculum also equips students with cross-cultural communication and global negotiation skills so they can effectively carry out successful global businesses.

Thunderbird prides itself on the development of our students’ global mindset. Students develop cultural sensitivity, embrace diversity and differences, and learn to be ambassadors of the world. That helps them navigate through political pressures and get the job done. With our experiential learning courses, students gain practical consulting experience and learn how businesses are run globally. We also have one of the most connected alumni networks, which plays a vital role for our graduates in an increasingly uncertain world business environment.
Preparing for the Complexities of a Changing World

Graduate study offers talented students the chance to advance their careers and make a difference in the world. Why is the study of international relations important?

The economy is increasingly global and interdependent and so is the bigger picture—quality of life and human development in the future will be driven by solving problems that can't be contained by borders, such as climate change, water scarcity, financial instability, terrorism, and migration. Professionals who can understand and translate the complexities of a changing world are in high demand. A graduate education in international relations is an excellent platform for those who want to create the greater good.

What will the next generation of students need to succeed in the field of international development?

International development is at an inflection point: Many countries have reached middle-income status and their development needs have evolved. Longstanding poverty, violence, high mortality, and unemployment are likely tied to root causes such as poor governance. The interdisciplinary approach at Johns Hopkins SAIS prepares students to work across sectors and to be effective in multiple fields of practice. Our scholars and practitioners train students to examine problems from different facets of policy: as political scientists, historians, and economists.

What do students gain from their experiences beyond the classroom?

Hands-on learning is a hallmark of the Johns Hopkins SAIS experience. Through study trips, summer internships, and extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to apply what they have learned in the classroom to address complex, real-world scenarios.

Several programs of study offer students the opportunity to work across sectors with clients who are at the forefront of tackling challenging global issues, and nothing makes academic concepts they have learned in the classroom more real than running a project for a client on their own. For example, students in the International Development program have recently partnered with clients to investigate the sanitation and nutrition environment of street vendors in India, identify best practices for financing young entrepreneurs in the Philippines, and develop a business case to manufacture and distribute water filters in rural Cambodia.

Students also have the opportunity to explore the real-world impact of international policy through dozens of study trips each year. Recent study trips have included meeting with officials at a migrant intake center on the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, analyzing the technology transfer and market adaptation of green power projects in China, and exploring Islamic finance in the context of access and religious norms in Malaysia.

How should aspiring foreign affairs professionals think about their futures?

Most of the issues that concern international policy are bipartisan. We need to work on creating more bipartisan consensus by being fact-driven and focused on effective outcomes. The next generation of international relations professionals will need to engage with people who don’t agree with their views. A constructive dialogue leads to better analysis, better findings, and the shared understanding which makes it possible for people around the world to pursue better lives. The school’s unique community of diverse and passionate faculty, staff, and students challenge and inspire each other to achieve their goals.
All Voices Matter: Shaping the Discussion on Global Peacebuilding

You represented Seton Hall’s School of Diplomacy at the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC) conference in Uganda. How did that opportunity come about?

Diplomacy students are recognized as colleagues from the time they arrive at Seton Hall. We’re trusted to represent the school and collaborate with faculty and staff at the highest levels by working with them on research, engaging with dignitaries at special events, and participating in fieldwork. This opportunity was no exception. Our dean, Andrea Bartoli, is a founding member of GAAMAC and makes a point of getting to know diplomacy students. After working together on integrating GAAMAC into the student experience, he invited me to attend the biannual conference as his representative. It was a big responsibility, and I felt honored to be asked. Seeing states and civil society come together to address diverse viewpoints on mass atrocity prevention was a tremendous experience. At the conference, I met a diplomat who is part of the team negotiating a peace treaty for my home country of Colombia. That’s an opportunity I wouldn’t have gotten anywhere else.

How did you prepare for the conference?

My class in international organizations inspired my interest in GAAMAC and helped me understand that it was created from the need for a common platform to empower prevention. My comparative foreign policy course showed me why states behave in certain ways, gave me tools to assess policies that address ongoing conflicts, and allowed me to appreciate the varied interests behind positions adopted by state representatives at the conference.

What has this experience taught you about students’ role in the work being done to prevent mass atrocities?

Age is not an obstacle when it comes to shaping the discussion and pressuring states to commit to prevention efforts. The student voice is not only welcomed—it matters. At the conference, I facilitated a panel on the role of youth and education in the prevention of mass atrocities. My earlier participation in the school’s All Conflict is Local forum was great preparation. I connected academic experience with personal experience and applied what I was learning. I was truly inspired by how this panel was received, and it gives me hope about the active role students can take.

How is your access to faculty and direct engagement in the field impacting your career path?

It has been incredible to start making a difference now and not wait until after graduation. I have made connections—at the GAAMAC conference and at the school—with state and civil society professionals from around the world. At my current internship with Caritas Internationalis, I am interacting with many of these same key players. My professional network has been transformed, and the impact that I can make is greater as a result.

Going to the GAAMAC conference helped me realize my goal of working for a nongovernmental organization (NGO). By gaining a better understanding of peace and conflict resolution at the School of Diplomacy, and finishing my dual degree in business, I hope to help NGOs maximize their resources and to contribute to the peace processes in Colombia and other regions.
Promoting Research and Learning on Global Issues in a Changing World

The Humphrey School of Public Affairs boasts a faculty with deep research and professional experience in global issues. Our degree programs combine rigorous training in policy analysis with research opportunities and internship placements around the world, allowing students to graduate with substantive knowledge as well as practical tools critical in helping to resolve conflicts and build lasting peace.

How does the Humphrey School account for emerging roles in addressing conflict?

The ways that violent conflict plays out globally have evolved substantially in recent decades. While conflicts between states—and related high-level diplomacy—remain important, the vast majority of conflicts worldwide are subnational or transnational conflicts involving violent non-state actors: civil wars, terrorism, and gang-related violence. The impact on civilians has been devastating—millions are displaced within their home countries or living as refugees—and raises questions about how international actors can better protect civilians. My research and recent book examine the causes and effects of wartime violence against civilians. Collectively, the Humphrey School’s interdisciplinary faculty are well-positioned to address the changing context of contemporary global conflict, including Professor Ragui Assaad, expert in the impact of conflict-related refugee flows on affected groups and host communities; Mary Curtin, diplomat-in-residence, former Foreign Service officer with practical knowledge and experience in diplomacy; and Professor James Ron, scholar of human rights, whose current research examines public opinion about how ordinary citizens view the work of human rights organizations.

How is the Humphrey School preparing students to navigate changes in the geopolitical landscape?

Drawing on the wealth of its faculty expertise, the Humphrey School prepares students to navigate changes in the geopolitical landscape. In addition to a rigorous foundation in policy analysis, research methods, and professional skills, students have access to courses and concentrations addressing a range of global issues such as international trade, civil war and conflict, human rights, development practice, diplomacy, and more. Students also have opportunities to earn minors in the fields of international law, public health, and human rights.

Our partnership with the Stimson Center in Washington, DC, provides research and internship opportunities with experts on emerging issues in international security. Our faculty, experienced in diplomacy and politics, teach students negotiation skills through courses in diplomacy and crisis exercises presented by the U.S. Army War College. Our students—who come to the Humphrey School with wide-ranging global experiences, from work with refugees in conflict zones to military experience across the world—along with our international fellows build a vibrant environment for researching and analyzing policy solutions for a changing world.

Humphrey School of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota
Breadth, Depth, Innovation

Studying at the Vienna School of International Studies (DA) is an opportunity to prepare for the varied challenges of an international career. The unique multidisciplinary teaching approach is dedicated not only to the highest academic standards but also to linking theory and practice. Vienna, as a seat of a high number of international organizations (IOs) is a comparative advantage as well as the network of alumni from more than 40 countries.

How does the DA account for emerging roles in addressing conflict?

Our three graduate programmes—the Master of Advanced International Studies (MAIS), the Master of Science in Environmental Technology and International Affairs (ETIA), and the Diploma Program—offer a broad range of courses on conflict. This includes, for example, interstate conflict and transnational criminal networks, cyberwar, and international terrorism. Situated in Vienna and being close to IOs such as the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe and the International Atomic Energy Agency, studying conflict is not just a theoretical endeavor for us. We link academic scrutiny firmly to evolving practices of addressing conflicts.

What are the ramifications for established ideas and organizations whose aim is to address conflict? How is the DA adjusting its teaching to account for these changes?

We firmly believe that the complexities of today’s world warrant a well-rounded education. In order to achieve this, our graduate programs zoom out and in. On the one hand, they are distinctly multidisciplinary, crisscrossing between economics, law, history, and political science. This provides students with a rich repertoire to make sense of international affairs. On the other hand, we focus on particular issues and geographical regions in order to help students acquire in-depth knowledge. This applies, for instance, to arms control, development, the environment, and migration as much as it does to Africa, Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Our language training in all UN languages adds further depth. We constantly adapt the scope and depth of our curriculum in order to analyze how world politics evolves.

How are you preparing students to navigate changes in the geopolitical landscape?

While we have always offered courses on geopolitics, we have expanded our offerings in the last few years. Following our teaching philosophy, we address the economic, historical, legal, and political dimensions of geopolitics. We also look in depth at regions in which new geopolitical dynamics play out, for instance, between the European Union and Russia, the Middle East, in the Arctic, and in the South China Sea. Many of our courses revolve around the evolving world order and, with it, the crucial issue of how great power relations change peacefully.

How are you considering the role of technology in mitigating or sparking conflict?

The role of technology features prominently in all our programs. For example, we have recently expanded our course offerings on digital diplomacy and cybersecurity. A considerable number of our students chooses to write their Master thesis on the nexus of technology and conflict. Our ETIA program addresses the linkages between technology and international politics in great depth and bridges the divide between the human sciences and the natural sciences.
Test Your Assumptions, Develop Expertise, Lead Policy Change

How do Sanford graduate programs connect the theory and practice of public policy?

The Sanford School’s graduate programs attract students who seek to gain analytical skills that they can take to public policy jobs, as well as advanced practitioners with many years of work experience in government who want to learn about new ideas. As a result, our courses and training are strongly grounded in theory but are focused on current public policy challenges.

Following the massive Zika outbreak in the Americas and the Caribbean, for example, we started the academic year with a workshop focusing on a Florida ballot referendum to allow experimental introduction of genetically modified mosquitoes to combat the virus. Rather than resuming business as usual, we offered an interdisciplinary workshop that brought together all students enrolled in economics and applied econometrics/research methods courses with experts and guest speakers, including a leading journalist and a geneticist working to create synthetic species.

In my own research, I focus on questions informed by economic theory and central to the practice of public policy and health policy in developing countries. For example, in our ongoing research on the effect of community-level accountability on governance interventions to improve child health outcomes, we also study how information structures within social networks drive participation. Our findings hold promise for finding innovative ways to increase participation, which is always a big challenge in community-based health initiatives.

Urgent concerns and the rapid pace of global communication put pressure on policy analysts to produce quick answers. How can analysts make the case for large-scale or longitudinal studies?

It is indeed difficult to choose between the competing goals of quick answers for policymakers and long-term studies that examine the underlying behavioral underpinnings, or impact of, policy interventions. Both are important, and with some creativity and practical compromise, it is possible to do a large share of both.

For instance, in our ongoing project focusing on conditional cash transfers for maternal and child health in India, we developed a system of reporting indicators on a quarterly basis to help India’s national government with policy planning and implementation. This system also creates ongoing feedback that strengthens our longer term study.

How does the curriculum help students to become confident in their own powers of analysis rather than relying on others’ conclusions?

Given the menace of fake news and alternative facts in public policy debates today, a critical skill that our students learn is to weigh the credibility of evidence based on strength of design and analysis. This focus is also reflected in Sanford’s commitment to improve transparency and standards of reporting in media to inform public policy. One of our faculty members, Professor Bill Adair, created the Pulitzer Prize–winning news source, PolitiFact, which pioneered fact-checking.

In courses, whether they focus on economic theory, evaluation methods, or specific policy areas such as education and health, students are encouraged to keep a critical eye and to ask questions that get at the underlying assumptions behind policy positions. Combined with the small classroom environment where students are encouraged to speak up, this training helps them develop confidence to challenge the conventional wisdom.
Diverse Research and Training to Solve Complex Regional and Global Problems

How do you train students at Waseda University’s Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS)?

At GSAPS, we train students interested in and concerned with understanding and finding solutions to the complex and diverse problems we face in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere, including poverty, economic inequality, gender equality challenges, environmental issues, territorial disputes, national security tensions, and others. GSAPS hopes that our graduates will contribute to building a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous world. To nurture our students, GSAPS emphasizes not only the development of expertise in a core discipline—international politics, economics, sociology, history, and others—but also sensitivity to diverse disciplinary concerns to enhance interdisciplinary inquiry. With core competence and broad issue coverage, GSAPS alumni are encouraged to be both capable and flexible in dealing with problems in a rapidly changing world. Many move quickly into fulfilling careers in international organizations, government and government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

What are the unique strengths of GSAPS?

Located in Japan at the center of Tokyo, a gateway to a rapidly growing Asia, GSAPS provides an ideal site for students interested in conducting research in regional and global issues and in gaining international experience. Our master’s degree students hail from over fifty different countries, and roughly 80 percent of the 120 students we take in each year are from outside of Japan. Also, the successful recruitment of top students to GSAPS has been buoyed by our ability to offer a number of scholarships to qualified applicants.

Another distinctive feature of our master’s degree program is project research. Carried out in faculty-led research seminars, project research allows students to prepare their Master of Arts research with faculty guidance and frequent discussion with classmates. Furthermore, GSAPS enjoys the advantage of being a part of Waseda University, one of the oldest and best private universities in Japan and Asia and the alma mater of a number of Japan’s past prime ministers, as well as many private sector executives and academic leaders. Students and alumni of GSAPS have the opportunity to be a part of the broader global Waseda University network.
A New Kind of International Affairs

What was the original motivation for launching the Julien J. Studley Graduate Programs in International Affairs (GPIA) in 2001?

Our founding director, Mike Cohen—who led the World Bank’s urban department for many years—wanted to design an alternative international affairs program. He wanted it to have a truly global focus—looking at issues in poor and middle-income countries, not only at the latest issues in U.S. foreign policy. The program would be committed to practice and getting students out in the field, and be critical, engaged, and iconoclastic, in The New School tradition. He put together a faculty with this in mind, and these orientations are still central to our program.

What is the difference between the GPIA MA and MS degree programs?

Our MA degree is an intensive, 42-credit program which attracts students who are looking to start a new career in international affairs. MA students can focus their studies in one of five concentrations that focus on conflict, media, cities, governance, and development, each of which is motivated by issues of social justice and human rights. The MS, on the other hand, is a 30-credit program designed for professionals with at least 2-3 years of international work experience. The modular MS curriculum allows students to combine courses in specific subject and skill areas that serve their personal interests and career goals.

What makes The New School’s program different from other international affairs programs?

Traditionally, the field has been centered on economics and political science. Although other programs bring in new perspectives, their core curriculum is still organized around classic areas. One can certainly study those topics at The New School, but our program is distinguished by our critical perspective, our commitment to practice and engaged learning, the unique possibilities in New York for students of international affairs, and the connections across The New School in media, design, and social research. There is no other international affairs program that combines this set of things.

Another attractive distinction of GPIA is that our program is flexible. We do not march students through a bunch of required courses—we believe that students should put together a course of study guided by their own interest. Our program has always been accommodating for nontraditional students: people who are changing careers or working full- or part-time. We are committed to making our program work for people in different situations.

Third, our International Field Program is an entirely unique opportunity for our graduate students. Students spend two summer months at our field sites abroad getting on-the-ground experience. They work and conduct research with community-based organizations, NGOs, and government agencies around the world.

What has been students’ favorite part of GPIA?

Students love the program and report that they find it to be a transformative experience. Dealing with international affairs is not like fixing a car—just a matter of knowing which part to replace or which screw to adjust. It is about critically engaging with the field: Why are we asking certain questions and not others? What political agendas are behind particular answers to global problems? Students who come to our program are interested in these questions, and I think they are satisfied with what they find.
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The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) brings together the leading graduate programs dedicated to professional education in international affairs. Members have demonstrated excellence in multidisciplinary, policy-oriented international studies.

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