# GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## MPIA Graduate Handbook

### 2025 - 2026

~~~ School of Public & International Affairs ~~~

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

*This handbook is intended for the use of graduate students in Master of Public and International Affairs (MPIA). It provides information on curriculum, course descriptions and schedules, costs and financial assistance, Graduate School forms and regulations, and other matters important to the successful completion of graduate work in GIA. Read the Handbook carefully. If questions arise that are not addressed here, please check with the Chair of the GIA Program. For questions concerning Graduate School or University policies, refer to the Graduate Policies and Procedures and Course Catalog or home page of graduate studies at http://graduateschool.vt.edu/*

## Table of Contents

# Introduction

Government and International Affairs

School of Public and International Affairs

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

The analysis of government and international affairs during the 21st century clearly constitutes a complex and interdisciplinary set of challenges. To be effective, such study requires knowledge from all of the social sciences and humanities. This program in the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) draws insights from these areas of learning into the multidimensional study of governance processes in all levels of society and international affairs. The faculty and students in the Government and International Affairs (GIA) program work jointly to cultivate their experience, knowledge, and skill with regard to the governance practices, political institutions, social dynamics, cultural values, workplace conditions, spatial formations, historical trends, and ethical conflicts that intersect in the workings of government, business, and not-for-profit organizations. Therefore, methodological pluralism is the foundation of GIA's scholarly pursuits. This program approaches the challenges of governance and international affairs comparatively, empirically, and historically at each level of activity and analysis to see how the processes of globalization are being shaped and what their implications may be. We also carefully consider the requirements for more democratic governance of the economy and society. The faculty's key educational objectives are to conduct research, perform service, and train graduate students—at both the masters and doctoral levels of study—in a manner that can engage the GIA program as well as the larger School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) at Virginia Tech in the public life of our nation and the world. Through this work, the GIA program contributes to the development of new knowledge, enhances global well-being, and prepares all SPIA graduates with the latest skills for conducting their research, service, and teaching.

The Government and International Affairs Program offers two graduate degrees: a masters degree, or the Masters in Public and International Affairs (MPIA), and the doctoral degree, or the Government & Globalization stream in the Planning, Governance & Globalization (PG&G) Ph.D. program in SPIA and three Graduate Certificates (Middle East Studies, Security & Global Inequality and Economic Risk. The MPIA and PGG Ph.D. degrees also have individual faculty collaborating with the GIA faculty from four other colleges: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Science, Natural Resources, and Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. The goal of these two GIA graduate programs is to prepare SPIA graduates for a life-long, rich, and full engagement in

public activity, continuing professional development, and effective service as academics, government officials, journalists or technical experts in the vitally important fields of government and international affairs. The overall unifying focus of the School of Public and International Affairs is politics, policy, planning, and practice. GIA students will work closely with faculty and students in the school's two sister programs—Public Administration and Public Policy as well as Urban Affairs and Planning—and those departments in the other collegiate units at Virginia Tech that can assist them with their education.

As part of their graduate education, each student will accumulate a stock of substantive knowledge, acquire the appropriate research skills, and achieve a sophisticated level of ethical awareness about the world's most important political processes, spatial dynamics, social institutions, and cultural practices at the local, national, and global levels of operation. The GIA program, then, sees itself meeting the following objectives for its students in the School of Public and International Affairs:

I.      Give effective in-depth training in the many disciplines needed to understand government and international affairs—ranging from cultural studies, economics, geography, and history to political science, sociology, technoscience, urbanism, and world systems—through coursework and research projects that integrate the most up-to-date theoretical frameworks, methods of analysis, and discursive practices from both quantitative and qualitative schools of analysis.

II.     Cultivate a deep knowledge of the key concepts and basic facts about the political system of the world's major nation-states, including their constitutional and legal foundations, major political ideals and values, government institutions, forms of economy, structures of social influence and cultural power, and distinctive policy-making processes in order to understand their critical role in the world today during the post-Cold War era.

III.    Develop this comparative knowledge of the world's many diverse political systems as well as the dynamics of globalization in order to provide grounded empirical area-specific knowledge and theoretical understanding of the complexities behind international affairs, which are understood to be culturally, economically, politically, socially, and technologically challenging problematics in the private and public spheres of action.

IV.     Provide students with extensive critical awareness of classical, social, modern, ethical, and cultural thought to reveal the fundamental values and perennial issues contested in governance, and of the struggles by women, racial minorities, workers, religious groups, consumers, nationalist movements, and others to articulate alternative moral/ethical frameworks, which examine disparities caused by work, race, income, gender, and culture, for interpreting and evaluating political discourse in governance and international affairs.

V.      Provide students with useful knowledge of the major problems and the leading policy and legal issues confronting all contemporary political systems, but particularly for the U.S.A. in the new struggles of the 21st century over globalization.

4

VI. Cultivate the ability to understand and appreciate many facets of human diversity, which will help students analyze and debate the full-range of competing perspectives on contemporary policy issues, to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in their professional research, public debate, and personal development as they engage themselves as active citizens in community life—locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

VII. Provide masters students with many diverse opportunities to develop their research and writing skills through coursework and research projects that link the theory and practice of government and international affairs to actual problem-solving as they specialize their studies of global security, NGOs, the nonprofit sector, health policy, environmental policy, labor policy, and information policy.

VIII. Prepare doctoral students with a systematic sense of government and international affairs through specialized knowledge and analytic skills in at least three major subfields, and provide advanced training in governance research, scholarly writing, and professional skills that will prepare them either for further advanced research work or for their chosen professional careers in academe, government, not-for-profit organizations, consulting groups, corporate life, or the media.

# Faculty

## *North Capital Region*

ARIEL AHRAM, 2012. Ph.D. Georgetown University (2008), government. Professor and GIA Program Chair. State formation and state failure, global security, human security, politics of the Middle East, multi-method research techniques. E-mail: ahram@vt.edu Office: 900 N. Glebe Rd Arlington, VA 22203

GISELLE DATZ, 2007. Ph.D. Rutgers University (2007), international relations. Associate Professor. Economic development, global finance, Latin American comparative politics, qualitative research methods. E-mail: gdatz@vt.edu Office: 900 N. Glebe Rd Arlington, VA 22203

JOEL PETERS, 2006. Ph.D. Oxford University (1987), Professor and SPIA Associate Director. Arab Israeli peace process, regional cooperation (Middle East/Mediterranean) and post conflict peace building. E-mail: peters25@vt.edu Office: 900 N. Glebe Rd Arlington, VA 22203

GERARD TOAL (Gearóid Ó Tuathail) Ph.D. Syracuse University (1989), political geography. Professor. Critical geopolitics, nationality studies, post-conflict reconstruction, global security, discourse analysis, Washington power structures, US foreign policy, Bosnia, Caucasus, and Russia. E-mail: toalg@vt.edu Office: Office: 900 N. Glebe Rd. Arlington, VA 22203

CHAD LEVINSON, Ph.D, University of Chicago (2017), political science. Assistant Professor. U.S. foreign policy, the presidency, civil society, information warfare. Email: chadlevinson@vt.edu. Office: 900 N. Glebe Rd Arlington, VA 22203

### Affiliated Faculty
JOYCE BARR, Ph.D. Pacific Lutheran University (1976). Professor Practice. Former Secretary of State. Human Rights, Crisis Management, Oversight of U.S. Facilities Abroad. Email: ambbarr@vt.edu Office: 900 N. Glebe Rd Arlington, VA 22203

## *Blacksburg*

TIMOTHY W. LUKE, 1981. Ph.D. Washington University-Saint Louis (1981), political science. University Distinguished Professor, Political Science and Government and International Affairs. Environmental politics, cultural studies, comparative politics, international political economy, history of political thought, contemporary political theory, comparative and international politics. Phone: 540-231-6633 E-mail: twluke@vt.edu Office: 539 Major Williams Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061

NATALYA BRANTLY, Ph.D. Virginia Tech (2022), science and technology studies. Assistant Professor. Global health, health technology policy, biomedical security. Email: nbrantly@vt.edu. Office: Architecture Annex, Blacksburg VA 24061

## **Affiliated Faculty**

ILJA LUCIAK.Ph.D. The University of Iowa (1987), political science. Affiliated Professor, Political Science and Chair, Political Science. Democratic theory and gender politics, revolutionary movements, reproductive rights, and globalization. Phone: 540-231-6571 E-mail: iluciak@vt.edu Office: 531 Major Williams Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061

YANNIS STIVACHTIS. Ph.D. University of Lancaster (1996), international relations. Affiliated Associate Professor, Political Science and International Studies. Expansion of international society, expansion of regional international societies, EU foreign, security and defense policy. Phone: 540-231- 5816 E-mail: ystivach@vt.edu Office: 119 Major Williams Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061

EDWARD WEISBAND. Ph.D. Johns Hopkins University (1969), political science. Diggs Endowed Professor of Political Science. World political economy with an emphasis upon international normative standards, in particular, the role and effectiveness of international institutions in promoting and monitoring such standards during the present era of globalization. Phone: 540-231-5298 E-mail: weisband@vt.edu Office: 501 Major Williams Hall, Blacksburg, VA 240615

ANDREW J. SCERRI. PhD. Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (2007), Associate Professor. International Studies. Environmental Political Theory, Urban Sustainable Development Policy, Citizen Studies, Ecological Economics, Environmentalism. Email ajscerri@vt.edu. Office: 515 Major Williams Hall Blacksburg, VA 240615

LILIAN C. FROST. PhD. George Washington University (2020), political science. Assistant Professor, Citizenship, Refugees and migration, Middle East Comparative Politics, Law and Society. Email:lfrost@vt.edu. Office: 531 Major Williams Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061

# Staff

The Office Staff is essential to the success of GIA's educational efforts. As members of the staff, each are to be treated with the same respect and courtesy extended to members of the faculty.


Elia Amegashie
Graduate Program Coordinator, SPIA
Phone: (571) 858-3109
E-mail: elia@vt.edu
Office: 900 N Glebe Rd, Arlington, VA 22203

Kelly Crist
Manager, Faculty & Student Affairs
PGG Coordinator
Phone: 540-231-2291
E-mail: kcrist@vt.edu
Office: 220 Stanger St. Blacksburg, VA 24061

Bradley Yost
Business Manager, SPIA
Phone: (540)231-5485
E-mail: byost3@vt.edu
Office: 220 Stanger St. Blacksburg, VA 24061

Name: Shelley Adkins
Fiscal Technician
Phone: (540) 231-0632
E-mail: sladkins@vt.edu
Office: 220 Stanger St. Blacksburg, VA 24061

# Plan of Study

*Maximum and Minimum Requirements for Master's Degree*

In developing your plan of study, you must adhere to the following course requirements set by the Graduate school at Virginia Tech:

| Guidelines for Graduate Course Options | | |
|---|---|---|
| General Courses | Paper & Project (Final Exam is a Major Paper) | Thesis (Final Exam is a Thesis) |
| | | |
| 5000-level courses (minimum hours) (Excludes 5904, 5994: You may only take a maximum of 6 hours in 5974--Independent Study and/or 5984--Special Study) | 33 credit hours | 30 credit hours |
| GIA 5904--Project & Report | 3 credit hours | N/A |
| GIA 5964--Field Work/Practicum | 3 credit hours | N/A |
| GIA 5994--Thesis & Research | N/A | 6 credit hours |
| Total Minimum Required Hours | 36 credit hours | 36 credit hours |

To be eligible for graduation, all MPIA students must file a Plan of Study no later than the end of the semester prior to the proposed final term. However, students and their advisors should begin drafting their Plan of Study in their first semester. An example of a Plan of Study is included in this Handbook or you may get download versions at http://www.gia.vt.edu/ . The Plan of Study must be signed by all of the appropriate faculty members, including especially your MPIA committee chair in GIA, before being submitted to the GIA coordinator.

Due to resource constraints, part-time students have a major paper or field work/practicum as their option, not a thesis. However, if you are a full time student you have the option of a major paper, field work/practicum or a thesis. Students can consult with the Director for substitutions in their plans of study.

ONLINE COURSES

A number of GIA courses are offered in an online format throughout the year. Some of those courses form part of the OLMA degree (Online Master's in Political Science). Students should only enroll in online classes taught by GIA faculty. Online courses

taught by other faculty will not be accepted as part of your plan of study without written permission from the GIA chair prior to enrolling. Courses will not be accepted retroactively. A list of online  courses will be distributed prior to the start of each semester.

# Proposed Plan of Study - Masters of Public and International Affairs

| Area | Dept. Course # | Course Title | Sem. Crs. | Year/Term Planned ▼ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Core Courses (12 hrs) | GIA | | 3 | |
| | GIA | | 3 | |
| | GIA | | 3 | |
| | GIA | | 3 | |
| | | | | |
| Modes of Enquiry (12 hrs) | GIA 5115 | Research Methods 1 [REQUIRED COURSE] | 3 | |
| | | Elective Choice (6 hrs.*) | | |
| | | | | |
| | | Thesis, Major Paper, Practicum* | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | * If choosing the Thesis option: choose 3 hours of Electives and 6 hours of Thesis (GIA 5994) | | | |
| Specializations (12 hours) | | Foundation Choice | | |
| | | Elective Choices (9 hrs. total) | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

# Curriculum Requirements

TOTAL CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED. 36 credit hours total.

Some Core or Modes of Inquiry courses also may serve as electives. Students can choose how to use these courses but cannot list them twice in a plan of study.

**CORE CLASSES\*: 12 credit hours (4 courses)**

| | |
|---|---|
| GIA/UAP 5004 | Power and Policy in the U.S. |
| GIA/UAP 5274 | Comparative Social Movements |
| GIA 5524 | International Development |
| GIA/PSCI 5444 | International Politics |
| GIA/UAP/PAPA 5034 | Global Political Economy |
| GIA 5404 | Topics in Political Geography |
| GIA 5374 | Electronic Governance |
| GIA 5474 | Global Governance |

**MODES OF INQUIRY: METHODS AND THEORY 12 credit hours (4 courses)**

| | |
|---|---|
| FOUNDATION: REQUIRED COURSE | |
| GIA/PSCI 5115 | Research Methods* |
| ELECTIVES: (6 hours**) selected from below or you may choose from unused foundation course: **Effective Fall 2025, GIA/PSCI 5224 and GIA/PSCI 5474 will be removed and GIA/PSCI 5116 Research Methods will be added..** | |
| UAP 5224 | Quantitative Techniques |
| GIA/PSCI 5354 | Public Policy Analysis |
| GIA/PSCI 5214 | Contemporary Political Theory |
| GIA/PSCI 5224 | Alternative Political Theory |
| GIA/UAP/PAPA 5464 | Qualitative Methods in Global Studies |
| GIA/PSCI 5474 | Global Governance |
| GIA/UAP/PSCI 5504 | Discourse Analysis |
| Or other committee approved methods/theory course | |

| DEFENSE: Major Paper, Thesis or Practicum: (3 hours***) selected from: | |
|---|---|
| GIA 5904 | Major Paper (3 cr.) |
| GIA 5964 | Field Work/Practicum (3 cr.) |
| GIA 5994 | Thesis (6 cr.) |
| *GIA/PSCI 5115 should not to be taken as an online course. This course meets Graduate School Ethics  Requirement. <br> **If choosing the Thesis option: choose 3 hours of Electives and 6 hours of Thesis. Please Note: As per University policy, students selecting the Masters Paper option may not take over 6  credit hours at the 4000 level in fulfillment of this degree. | |

Note: Course delivery includes face-to-face seminars, video conferencing or online modes, and the mix will vary from semester  to semester. Some classes may include limited student travel and/or intensive time-clustered sessions.

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION (ELECTIVES) 12 credit hours (4 courses)

Governance & Global Security

| FOUNDATION: at least 3 hours (1 course) selected : | |
|---|---|
| GIA/UAP/PSCI 5254 | Global Conflicts |
| GIA 5624 | Conflict Resolution & Peace Building |
| GIA 5514 (PSCI 5514) | Global Security |
| ELECTIVES: 9 hours (3 courses) selected from below including unused foundation course above: | |
| GIA/UAP 5274 | Comparative Social Movements |
| GIA/PSCI/UAP 5284 | Transnational Migration |
| GIA/PSCI 5354 | Public Policy Analysis |
| GIA 5404/GEOG 5424 | Topics in Political Geography |
| GIA 5414/PSCI 5414 | Industrial Democracies |
| GIA/PSCI 5424 | Communist & Post-Communist Systems |
| GIA/PSCI 5434 | Politics of Developing Areas |
| GIA/PSCI 5484 | Contemporary American Foreign Policy |

| | |
|---|---|
| GIA/PSCI 5534 | Regionalism and Political Development |
| GIA/PSCI 5584 | Environmental Politics and Policy |
| GIA 5614 | Israeli Palestinian Conflict |
| GIA/UAP 5524 | International Development |
| GIA 6114 | Critical Geopolitics |
| GIA/PSCI 6124 | Topics in Security Studies |
| GIA/PSCI 6134 | Topics in Conflict Analysis |
| GIA/PSCI 6144 | Topics in Global Governance |
| STS 6234 | Advanced Topics |
| GIA 5314 | Middle East Geopolitics |
| GIA 5664 | Energy and Environmental Security |
| GIA 5634 | Global Social Policy |
| GIA 5584 | Environmental Politics and Policy |
| PSCI 5374 | Electronic Governance |
| PSCI 5234 | Women in Global Politics |
| ASPT 5134 | Islamic Political Thought |

# Graduate Certificates

## Graduate Certificate in Middle East Politics and Society

The certificate focuses on the politics, society, and history of the peoples of North Africa, Southwestern Asia, Asia  Minor, and the Arabian Peninsula, related borderlands and island groups, and including emigrant and immigrant  groups. It addresses the causes and consequences of conflict in the region, the impact of external interventions,  including colonialism, and the drivers of political and social change.

Total Number of Credit Hours: 9 credit hours. (Transfer credits are not permitted)
Students will choose three courses:
GIA 5314 Middle East Geopolitics (3 credits)
GIA/PSCI 5614 (HIST 5544) Understanding the Israeli Palestinian Conflict (3 credits)
ASPT 5134 Islamic Political Thought (3 credits)
ASPT/HIST/RLCL 6124 (PSCI 6234) Pre-Modern Christian and Islamic Political Theory (3 credits) Another 5000-level or 6000-level course subject to approval by the certificate candidate's advisor.

## Graduate Certificate in Economic Risk and Global Inequality

The Certificate features courses that cover: global social policy, inequality, international development, global  political economy, and transnational social movements. This certificate broadens addresses the issue of human  security by addressing issues of global social policy, financial representation in the global economy.

Total Number of Credit Hours: 12 credit hours. (Transfer credits are not permitted)
Four courses must be selected from the courses listed below:
GIA/PAPA 5034 Global Political Economy (formerly, Democratic Governance of the Economy) (3 credits) GIA/UAP 5274 Comparative Social Movements (3 credits)
GIA 5434 Politics of Developing Areas (3 credits)
GIA/UAP 5524 International Development (3 credits)
GIA 5654 Global Social Policy (3 credits)
GIA 5474 Global Governance (3 credits)

## Graduate Certificate in Security Studies

This Certificate covers the area of global security, broadly defined and the myriad of security challenges and threats  facing the United States on the global stage.

Total Number of Credit Hours: 12 credit hours. (Transfer credits are not permitted)

Required courses: (6 credit hours)
PSCI 5444 - International Politics
PSCI 5484 - American Foreign Policy

Electives (6 credits hours)
PSCI 5324 - Executive Branch
PSCI 5464 - Critical Security Studies

# Graduate Courses

*Note: All course contents are revised periodically. For the latest version of a course of interest, please contact individual course instructors or one of GIA's administrative assistants*

GIA 5004 - Power and Policy in the U.S.
Social science theory and research on the distribution of power in the US, especially as it shapes important national policy outcomes. Institutional and class bases of power will be examined, including membership on corporate boards and in policy-shaping think tanks. Implications for democracy in society will be drawn. Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5034 (UAP 5034) (PAPA 5034) – Global Political Economy
The course delves into the contemporary history of capitalism since the crash of 1929 to present, highlighting episodes of financial instability, their impact on global governance, and domestic political consequences. Case studies explored include the Asian crisis of 1997, the global credit crisis of 2007-08, Brexit and other current challenges to the endurance of the European Union.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5104 (UAP 5104) - Urban and Regional Development Theory
An examination and critique of theories relating to socio-economic development and change at three major scales (international, national/regional, and intra-urban) and of theories relating to the linkages between the dominant processes operating at these major scales. Particular emphasis is given to the role of the state in urban and regional development.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5115 - Research Methods I
The purposes, problems, and strategies of political science research, emphasizing concept and hypothesis formulation, operationalization, research design, data collection techniques, data processing, and multivariate data analysis.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5116 - Research Methods I
The purposes, problems, and strategies of political science research, emphasizing concept and hypothesis formulation, operationalization, research design, data collection techniques, data processing, and multivariate data analysis.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5164 (UAP 5164) (PSCI 5164) - Collaborative Governance
Theoretical foundations of collaborative policy and governance approaches are examined. Strategies and methods for forming and sustaining collaborative coalitions are discussed. Case studies are used to illustrate the effectiveness of collaborative approaches in different policy domains.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5214 (PSCI 5214) - Contemporary Political Theory
Selected topics in contemporary political theory, including different models of social science inquiry and the use of basic concepts like power, ideology, rationality, and the state in the study of politics.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5224 (PSCI 5224) – Alternative Perspectives in Political Theory
Analysis of selected perspectives on politics including rational choice theory, critical theory, neo-Marxism, neo conservatism, post-industrialism, and post-structuralism.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5254 (UAP 5254) (PSCI 5254) - Global Conflicts
Examines theoretical issues in the study of global conflicts. Reviews theories of nationalism, states and territory as factors. Examines dynamics of contemporary conflicts from different regions of globe as case studies illustrating theoretical issues. Reviews role of leaders in conflict processes. Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5274 (UAP 5274) - Comparative Social Movements
This course will investigate the forms of public protest that occur all over the world, with special attention to activism in poor nations and to the recent emergence of transnational movements. Also examines why and when governments repress social movements. Explores movements that are grounded in collective identities based in class, race/ethnicity, gender, religion, and culture. Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5284 (UAP 5284) (PSCI 5284) - Transnational Migration
Overview of the dynamics, policies, governance, and citizenship regimes associated with the phenomenon of transnational migration. The course will emphasize local, national, and supranational examples and comparisons to explore these themes. Graduate standing
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5314 - Middle East Geopolitics
Key issues in international relations in the Middle East, including impact of political geography, emergence of regional systems, relationship between identity and citizenship, domestic and transnational political contestation, and U.S. regional policy. Application of theories of social change to examine linkage between citizenship, religion, and political authority. Focus on Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and the Persian Gulf region.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5354 (PSCI 5354) - Public Policy Analysis
Approaches to policy analysis and program evaluation including the techniques appropriate to various stages of the policy process.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5364 (STS 5364) (PSCI 5364) - Public Ecology
Examines policy developments and practices that move beyond the conceptual divisions and policy operations begun during the 1970's, which largely divided the more natural science- based environmental sciences from social science-based environmental studies. Mixes the insights of life science, physical science, social science, applied humanities, and public policy into a cohesive conceptual and operational approach to environmental protection in the 21st century. Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5374 (PSCI 5374) (PAPA 5374) - Electronic Governance
Examines applications of information technology in government from the point of view of governments and citizens. Survey of the relationship between e-government and e-democracy and of government management techniques. Explores problematic issues related to e-government, such as privacy, the digital divide, and information security.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5384 - Global Economic Diplomacy
Examines dynamics of international trade, institutional structure, and treaty-based rules under which trade takes place. Economic theory of trade, multilateral governance structure of the World Trade Organization; political economy of trade negotiations; and the legal system of multilateral dispute settlement.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5404 - Topics in Political Geography
Territorial basis of political systems, political processes, and political behavior from local to global scales; evolution of contemporary political geographic patterns, territorial divisions, and process of partitioning the earth. Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5414 (PSCI 5414) - Industrial Democracies
Political patterns and processes of development in selected democracies in Europe, North America, and Asia emphasizing the political problems of contemporary industrial societies and their likely evolution in a "post industrial" era.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5424 (PSCI 5424) - Communist & Post-Communist Systems
Political processes and developmental trends in communist and post-communist systems in Russia and other CIS states, Eastern Europe, the People's Republic of China, and the Third World. Current economic, political, and social issues and their likely development.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5434 (PSCI 5434) - Politics of Developing Areas
Political structures, economic growth, and cultural frameworks of developing nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America emphasizing the political and economic challenges of industrial development in a global economy.

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5444 (PSCI 5444) - International Politics
Theories of international organizations and relations among nations focusing on research in foreign policy  formulation and implementation, international integration, conflict resolution, and global political economy.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5454 (SPIA 5454) (PSCI 5454) - Adv Info Tech Policy
In-depth study and critical evaluation of selected complex issues related to information technology, society,  governance, and public policy. Focused attention is given to theoretical and methodological foundations of the area  of inquiry and to specific domains of policy making and implementation. Topics will be selected from IT-related  issues in such areas of concern as: cities, local communities, nonprofit organizations, governments, and global  networks. May be repeated on a different topic. Must meet prerequisites or have permission from the instructor.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5464 (UAP 5464) (PAPA 5464) - Qualitative Research Methods in Global Studies
Examines the philosophies and procedures guiding various qualitative methods used in the social science fields,  such as global studies, planning and policy. Exploration of alternative understandings of normal science and  consideration of the merits of adopting qualitative research approaches to disciplined analysis, including ethical  issues in research. Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5474 (PSCI 5474) - Global Governance
Examination of the norms, institutions and practices developed by the international community to address systemic  global governance problems: genocide, failed states, transnational corruption, displaced persons, AIDS, poverty.  Role of the United States in the world community examined. Power of international organizations versus states. Capacity  problems of both. Future of United Nations and global governance considered. Graduate Standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5484 (PSCI 5484) (HIST 5484) - Contemporary American Foreign Policy
Covers U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War, the stalemate with the Soviet Union, armament and arms control,  containment and deterrence, detente and Reaganism, and the end of the Cold War. Briefly covers events from  1989 to the present. Designed for students with an interest in foreign policy and global affairs. Prerequisite or  instructor's permission.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5504 (UAP 5504) (PSCI 5504) - Discourse Analysis
Examines the key theoretical sources and major practical applications of discourse analysis as a contemporary  social science methodology. Origins, major variants, and critical uses of discourse analysis in cultural studies,  semiotic methods, policy analysis, and organizational communication techniques also are considered. Graduate standing.

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5514 (PSCI 5514) - Global Security
Security examined as an essentially contested concept. Traditional national security and emergent global security  discourses and agendas explained. Security institutions and organizations analyzed. Questions of power, identity  and representation examined as factors delimiting security conceptions, practices and agendas. Graduate  Standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5524 (UAP 5524) - International Development
Social and cultural factors in the development of societies, including the role of women in development.  Contemporary developing countries, and historical material from developed countries; policy issues facing  governments of developing countries and those interested in assisting their development.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

PSCI 5524 - U.S. Foreign Policy After September 11 (GIA cross listing pending)
Course offers a historical and analytical evaluation of U.S. foreign policy after this epochal change especially with  regard to the war on terror, geopolitics in the Middle East, and relations with new global powers after the end of the  Cold War.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture/Online

GIA 5534 (PSCI 5534) - Regionalism and Political Development
Provides a systematic review of regional organizations, the theories and factors that explain their recent emergence  and an analytical framework for studying regional policy objectives such as peace and security, economic growth,  environmental protection and the pursuit of human rights. Regional variations between Europe, Latin America,  Asia, Africa and the Middle East are examined.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5554 (SPIA 5554) (PSCI 5554) – Culture, Politics and Society in Networks
Historical origins, institutional foundations, and theoretical interpretations of cultural, political, and social  interaction through computer mediated communication are examined. Particular attention is given to new types of  discourse, sources of power, and structures of society at all geographical levels in global computer and  communications networks.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA (PSCI) (WS) 5564 - Women and Globalization
Feminist theoretical paradigms that analyze impacts of globalization on women and girls. Impacts of globalization  on households and families. Relationship between globalizing processes and gender inequalities. Addresses  feminist controversies and women's transnational resistance.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5574 (UAP 5574) (PSCI 5574) - Arts, Culture, and Society
Considers the role of the arts in society, including architecture, music companies, or theater productions to  heritage sites, science museums, and art galleries. Effective arts policy in revitalizing urban economies was also examined.

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5584 (UAP 5584) (STS 5584) (PSCI 5584) - Environmental Politics and Policy
Course provides a broad introduction to the key ideas, actors and institutions related to
environmental politics and  policy in the United States, with some coverage of global issues. It is
intended to provide students with basic  interdisciplinary knowledge and an intellectual
framework for understanding and thinking critically about  environmental politics and policy.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5614 (PSCI 5614) (HIST 5544) - Israeli Palestinian Conflict
Dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Critical issues that underlie the conflict
and divide Israel and the  Palestinians. Diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the
conflict. Pre: Graduate Standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5624 (PSCI 5624) - Conflict Resolution & Peace Building
Comprehensive guide to contemporary conflict resolution. Strategies and approaches for
mitigating and resolving  conflict. Process of conflict transformation and reconciliation.
Pre: Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5634 - Global Social Policy
History of national and global welfare regimes since WWII. Theories of comparative
welfare regimes and the  emergence of global welfare regimes. Application of theories
of social rights and human rights to contemporary  issues in social policy at a global
level and intersections with international development policy.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5654 (UAP 5654) - Environmental Risk Analysis
This course will provide an overview of risk analysis as it pertains to environmental
policy, including distinguishing  among various concepts of risk, methods employed in
risk analysis, public policies regarding risk analysis, the risk  communication, proposed
alternative approaches to risk assessment, and the political controversies surrounding
risk analysis in the broad field of environmental regulation.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5664 - Energy and Environmental Security
Effect of energy and natural resources on conflict, security, and risk. Theories of scarcity
and human ecology  pertaining to causes of wars and insecurity. Identification drivers of
risk, resilience, and sustainability through case  studies and statistical data related to
different natural resources.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5904 - Project and Report
The major paper is one option (together with the Practicum and Thesis) which GIA
candidates may elect to  complete their degree requirements. It provides the candidate with
an opportunity to demonstrate: (1) a required  degree of comprehension of the concepts,

principles and theories relevant to their fields and (2) the ability to apply this understanding in a professional manner to a specific policy, planning or methodological issue by means of a sustained analytic argument. The exact character of the concerns to be examined in a major paper will be approved by a student's committee and may take the form of case studies, literature reviews, or sustained examination of policy or planning processes or outcomes.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5964 - Field Work/Practicum
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5974 - Independent Study
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5984 - Special Study
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 5994 - Research and Thesis
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6114 - Critical Geopolitics
Critical analysis of geopolitics as spatial discourse about world politics. Examines major concepts in critical geopolitics. Critically reads colonial, fascist, Cold War and post-Cold War geopolitical discourses. Discusses geopolitical knowledge in popular culture. Reviews latest research in the field of critical geopolitics. Graduate standing.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6124 (PSCI 6124) - Topics in Security Studies
Surveys the interface of globalization and security and the changing paradigm of security within global society. Reviews the impact of globalization on traditional understandings of state security, and provides an advanced understanding of the emerging challenges and threats to human and state security. May be repeated with a different topic content for a maximum of 12 credits.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6134 (PSCI 6134) - Topics in Conflict Analysis
Provides a comprehensive guide to the understanding of contemporary global conflicts and conflict resolution. Reviews the field of conflict analysis, demonstrates the various approaches to conflict resolution and explores the dynamics of conflict settlement. May

be repeated with a different topic content for a maximum of 12 credits.  Credit Hours: 3
Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6144 (PSCI 6144) - Topics in Global Governance
Provides a comprehensive guide to understanding of contemporary power pressures and responses
to global  economic and financial change along with its political and social repercussions.
Reviews the fields of international  political economy, demonstrates the various approaches to
adherence and resistance to globalization, and  explores the dynamics of the relationship between
states and markets. May be repeated with a different topic  content for a maximum of 12 credits.
Graduate standing required.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6204 (PSCI 6204) (ASPT 6014) - Theories of Globalization
Examination of past and present eras of globalization through various theoretical perspectives.
Addresses  colonialism and emergence of western models for development of poor countries.
Controversies about impacts of  current globalization on the nation-state, cultures, ecosystems,
and racial/ethnic/gender inequalities. Explores  present trends, such as globalization of agriculture
and food systems, industrial production, migration, human  rights, and anti-globalization
resistance. Pre-requisite may be substituted for any equivalent 5000 level  international course.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6214 (PSCI 6214) – Democracy Beyond the Ballot
Forms of ultra or enhanced democracy outside of state institutions, particularly those developing
in third sector  organizations, theories of democracy and research on functioning deliberative
democracies at the grassroots level,  in societal or international institutions. Graduate standing
required.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6224 (PSCI 6224) – Competing Conceptions of the Third Sector
Examines competing theories and conceptions of the third sector in relation to the for-profit firm
and in relation to  the state. International perspectives on voluntary grassroots action and its
challenges, along with its potential for  social transformation. Integration of theoretical and
research literature in the field.
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

GIA 6984 - Special Study
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture
Credit Hours: 1 to 19

GIA 7994 - Research and Dissertation
Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Level(s): Graduate Instruction Type: Lecture

# Student Advising

The faculty members in GIA take their teaching and advising responsibilities seriously. Any faculty member will be available for either academic or career advising upon request. Simply be certain to make appointments. In developing your plan of study, you must adhere to the following requirements:

ADVISING REQUIREMENTS
All full-time graduate students in GIA must:

• Have a major paper, field work/practicum or thesis advisor determined in the first semester.
•Have an advisory committee appointed by the first semester of their second year.
• File a plan of study by the end of the fall semester of the second year.
• Complete GIA 5115 to fulfill the Scholarly Ethics and Integrity requirement.
• Complete GIA 5004, 5504 or 5404 to meet the Diversity and Inclusion requirements.
• File an application for a degree (available online) in the last semester.

ASSIGNMENT OF ADVISORS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Upon entrance into the program, all first year students are assigned an interim advisor by the Director. Assignments are made based on students' academic interests as stated in their application and faculty advising loads. Students should take the opportunity to introduce themselves to their advisor and meet with them sometime early in the semester to begin preliminary planning for their plan of study.

If a student eventually wishes to change advisors, this may be done simply by:
• Obtaining approval from the new advisor,
• Notifying the old advisor, and
• Notifying the program director of the change.

During the spring semester of the first year, the student should work with his/her advisor to establish a capstone project advisory committee. Committee membership varies depending upon the form of capstone project a student selects. The Director must approve final membership.

The role of the advisory committee is to:
Approve the student's plan of study;
Serve as the student's thesis, major paper, or practicum committee; and,
Provide final approval on the student's thesis, major paper, or practicum.

Before the Plan of Study is signed by the advisory committee, changes in the composition of the committee can be done following the procedure for changing advisors above. After the Plan of Study is signed, committee changes are made with the Graduate School "Change of Committee" form requiring signatures of both old and new members and the Director. This form may be obtained from the GIA Coordinator.

# Finances and Financial Aid

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS (GAS)

GAs are awarded on the recommendation of the Program for 10 or 20 hours.

Those holding a Graduate Assistantship are paid on a bi-monthly basis on the 1st and 16th. To qualify for an out-of-state tuition waiver, a student must earn at least $4000 in an academic year while on assistantship. University graduate assistantships are awarded  annually. If an assistantship is granted on a semester basis at the beginning of the fall or spring semesters, continuation is dependent upon the availability of funds.

Students must enroll for at least twelve hours of graduate credit each semester to be eligible for financial  assistance and must make acceptable progress toward the degree to have assistance renewed. Students may  apply for more than four semesters of financial assistance. However, there are a limited number of awards  available, and students cannot depend on receiving support for more than two academic years.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT TUITION REMISSION

All GA students receive tuition remission in proportion to their GA support:  20-hour GAs receive full tuition, and 10-hour GAs receive one half tuition. As a benefit associated with university service, the remission of in-state tuition and mandatory E&G fees for a graduate student on assistantship is based upon the continued employment of the student for the complete academic semester of the remission. Students on graduate assistantships or graduate project assistantships are required to work the number of hours per week specified in the assistantship (10 or 20). Assignments are based, when possible, on matching student interests and faculty needs. This is not always possible, however, and students may not be  given their first choice of assignment. Faculty evaluate students' assistantship work at the end of each semester,  and continuance of the assistantship is contingent upon both academic and assistantship performance.

Decisions regarding assistantships are made solely on the basis of merit, that is, academic performance,  recommendations, GRE scores and any exceptional characteristics, e.g., prior professional work experience. While  GIA would like to provide funding for all students admitted to the graduate programs, available resources do not  permit it. Students eligible for student loans should contact the University's financial aid office: Scholarships and  Financial Aid, 200 Student Services Building, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061. Phone: 540-231-5179,  E-mail: *finaid@vt.edu* or *www.finaid.vt.edu*

*Comprehensive & Other Fees are paid by the graduate student.

GRADUATE RESEARCH FUNDS

When funds are available, GIA has a program to support students' thesis research when it involves fieldwork or it has substantial data collection costs. Funds are allocated on a competitive grant basis. Students must submit a proposal for funds by March of their first year. Those interested in applying for this support should discuss it with their advisor prior to submission of the proposal. Maximum award is $500.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees for graduate school are revised each year by the Board of Visitors to adjust for inflation and changes in the costs of education. Different tuition rates are levied for in-state and out-of-state residents. To qualify for in-state tuition, a student must be able to show proof of Virginia residency or be appointed to a graduate assistantship which earns more than $4,000 for the year. Out-of-state graduate students who are on a graduate assistantship of 10 hours or more qualify for the in-state rate. Tuition remission for all or portions of a semester's tuition are awarded by the department on an annual basis.

Tuition and Fees Rates: https://www.bursar.vt.edu/tuition-fee-rates/tuition-fees.html

TUITION DEFERMENT PLANS

Virginia Tech offers students a budget tuition plan, which allows tuition and fees to be paid over a four-month period for one semester or an eight-month period for the academic year. Information concerning this plan can be viewed on the Bursar's website (www.bursar.vt.edu). The application form can be downloaded from this website or you can request information and an application by calling (540) 231-6277.

# Support Services

REGISTRATION

Graduate students in GIA can register for classes online using the Hokie SPA drop/add system.

Course Request is done online in the fall (for spring semester) and in the spring (for the summer and following fall  semesters). Students should meet with their advisors prior to or during the course request week to discuss course registration.

JOB PLACEMENT

The Program assists students in job placement:

Notifies students of job announcements as it receives them.
Works with alumni to identify job possibilities for students.

Students, of course, are ultimately responsible for their career choices, but individual faculty and the program  assist as much as possible in securing job opportunities for our students.

Career Services and Professional Development Center: https://career.vt.edu/

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND FUNCTIONS

Students in Government and International Affairs participate in an active organization, the Graduate Student  Association (GSA), which maintains links with professional organizations at the local, state, and national levels and  is the liaison between the students and the faculty on departmental issues. The GSA student representatives  represent the program for the following:

Faculty meetings GIA curriculum committee GIA visiting speakers committee Alumni Committee University and college student committees

The GSA also sponsors a speaker series for students. Professionals from the local area are invited to present their  perspectives on issues germane to the planning and policy fields. The GSA also organizes social activities for  graduate students, including parties, athletic teams, and various outdoor events.

There are a number of graduate student organizations on campus to help students successfully complete their  programs-of-study and integrate them into campus life. The Graduate Student Assembly is the legislative body  representing the interests of graduate students on campus. Election to that body is through your college. A list of  student organizations is available from the Student Affairs Office or at http://www.dsa.vt.edu/ .

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

GIA sponsors a number of social functions during the year. Attendance is, of course, discretionary. They do  however; provide a chance to get acquainted with other students, faculty, staff, and spouses in an informal setting.

STUDENT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

The National Capital Region Graduate Student Services Office (GSSO), located at the Northern Virginia Center, Falls  Church, is a satellite office of the Graduate School on the main campus in Blacksburg and handles academic and  administrative matters. For further information, contact the GSSO at:

Virginia Tech, Northern Virginia Center
7054 Haycock Road
Graduate Student Services Office
Falls Church, VA 22043
Phone: (703) 538-8327 Fax: (703) 538-8320
Email: gssoncr@vt.edu


Cook Counseling Center:
220 Gilbert Street, Suite 2400, Blacksburg, VA 24060 | 540-231-6557
Information : https://ucc.vt.edu/


Hokie One Stop: Virginia Tech students in the greater Washington, D.C., metro area and at specialized campuses and sites in Northern Virginia outside that region are vital members of the Virginia Tech community. The resources listed on this page should help you connect to the academic and students support services you will need during your time as a student, and help you connect with fellow students, faculty, and staff.
Information: https://graduateschool.vt.edu/current-students/dc-hokieonestop.html

# Thesis, Major Paper, Practicum Policies

All students must successfully write and defend a thesis, major paper or practicum. The document must be completed and certified as "defensible" by members of the students committee before the final exam can be scheduled. The student committee shall consist of:

1. Major Paper: Three faculty members with Chair from GIA: the Chair must also sign the Graduate School examination form.
2. Field work/practicum: Three faculty members with Chair from GIA: the Chair must also sign the Graduate School examination form.
3. Thesis: Three faculty members with two members— including chairperson—from GIA

**The Major Paper**

The Major Paper is by far the most popular route for MPIA students as they prepare for graduation.

Students selecting this option should sign up for GIA 5904 - Project & Report. The major paper applies advanced research methodology to a problem or question of contemporary relevance in public and international affairs. It can be considered as a "scaled-down thesis." It does not necessarily involve formal analysis of primary sources. Instead, the major paper may consist of a case study or a comprehensive review of the theoretical literature related to a specific policy, planning, methodological issue or technique.

The exact nature of the activities reported in a major paper will be approved by a student's committee, and should be reflected in a written proposal signed by committee members and the Program Chair. Students receive three semester credits for completing and successfully defending a major paper. The defense, usually involves a 15 minute presentation followed by questions. This is part of the student's final examination. Note: Defenses will NOT be scheduled in the summer semester.

A rough timeline for the MPIA major paper is follows:

1. The semester before the final semester, identify and confirm a chair to oversee your major paper and identity at least two other faculty members to serve on the committee. You may have one outside committee members.
2. At the beginning of the final semester, notify GIA administrators that you intend to graduate and begin process to petition for graduation.
3. Around Week 10 of the final semester, have a complete draft of the major paper ready to circulate
4. Around Week 14 of the final semester, send a finalized copy to the committee.
5. At Week 16 or during final exam week, you will have the oral defense before the committee. The exact date will be set by the department.

*Students should consult the document '[MPIA Capstone Rules and Guidelines](#)' for more details.*

**The Practicum**

The Practicum is a course of study that involves actually working in the professional domain and using the knowledge and skills that have been learned to create a knowledge product grounded in contemporary practice.  The Practicum is reserved primarily for students who have significant experience working in a policy space.

There are three key differences between a Practicum and Major Paper. First, the Major  Paper is academic-oriented written paper whereas a Practicum is a professional work product that requires a formal presentation at defense. In word length, Practicum documents are shorter  than Major Papers, but involve more emphasis on professional presentation and  communication. Second, the Major Paper requires identification of an academic (theory  relevant) research question and 'puzzle' whereas a Practicum requires an in-depth analysis of a  pubic policy challenge and dilemma. Third, the audience for a Major Paper is mostly an academic one whereas the audience for a Practicum is the policy-making public. Oral  communication through briefing presentation is part of a Practicum so students should be able  to present and defend their ideas before a questioning audience.

In both instances, students are required to work with an adviser to identify and specify precisely a research topic. Advisers have the final say on whether a topic is acceptable or not. Advisers are allowed discretion to craft a Practicum capstone that they believe is best suited to the student's strengths and professional work context.

The final work product for the Practicum will be determined depending on the nature of the topic investigated or task to be completed. Students will consult with their advisors to devise a set of reasonable expectations about their Practicum. Together they will draw up a contract for the Practicum that will outline the nature of the work product (policy brief or background paper) and a timeline for its delivery. This must be completed by, at the latest, the end of the second week of the semester where the student has registered for a Practicum. Students need to meet with a potential faculty adviser to discuss a Practicum before the planned final semester so a clear set of expectations are established and agreed. These are to be completed by the student as  outlined, and then presented and defended before a three person committee.

All Practicums involve a 20-minute presentation before a GIA examining committee. A handout of the presentation, involving 15 to 25 illustrations, must be presented to the faculty committee before the defense.

The written form of the Practicum involves a choice between two options:

1. A policy brief of 6,000 to 8,000 words. The policy brief will provide crucial background on  a contemporary policy issue evaluating pros, cons, opportunities, and threats involved in  various policy options. It will present an executive summary of the arguments it makes,  and a series of recommendations. Policy briefs are professional documents that must  examine a policy question

from all sides. They are not briefs that involve the advancement of partisan political agendas or goals.

2. A policy background report of 6,000 to 8,000. This policy report will provide a comprehensive study of a contemporary policy issue, including its history and evolution, and evaluate current policy options. The report will present data collected during the course of a focused research task agreed in advance with your adviser and (possibly) professional place of work.

A system of presentation and review similar to the Major Paper will apply to Practicum work. These must be delivered first to the student's adviser for feedback and review. A red, green and yellow light will be indicated, and clear set of revisions set forth for progress. If they are approved, a defense date and time will be provided and the student will then have to request this date through the VT Graduate School website. After approvals are obtained, the presentation of these efforts as part of the student's conclusion to their MPIA studies can proceed and a faculty committee will evaluate the student's performance (with input from a professional office director and/or intern director where relevant).

*Students should consult the document '[MPIA Capstone Rules and Guidelines](#)' for more details.*

**The Thesis**

The MPIA thesis is primarily reserved for students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. or other academic advanced degree. Expectations regarding the character and quality of the research carried out in order to complete the thesis are outlined below. Full time students at the NCR may do a thesis as an option but are not required to do so. Students selecting this option should enroll in GIA 5994-Research & Thesis. The thesis presents the results of a well-defined and original research effort that involves either:

• The analysis of primary or secondary data sources;
• The analysis of primary or secondary document sources;
• The analysis of primary or secondary ethnographic sources; or
• The use of another academically legitimate analytical technique with approval and guidance of your thesis advisor and your committee.

The student rather than the faculty is responsible for defining the research problem and developing the research design for the study. A proposal for the thesis, signed by all committee members and the Program Chair, must be on file before a student may enroll for thesis credit. This proposal should include:

• An introduction, including a rationale or justification for the research;
• A discussion of the relevant literature on the topic;
• A specific statement of the hypotheses to be tested;
• A detailed outline of the data and methodology to be used; and
• A statement of expected findings.

The process for completing and obtaining approval of a thesis is:

• Select a general thesis topic or problem.
• Choose a faculty member to chair your thesis committee. In most cases, this will be your advisor and/or  the faculty member with whom you have been working most closely while a student.
• In consultation with your advisor, develop a specific research outline.
• Write a formal research proposal. The proposal must clearly define the problem, state the rationale for  exploration of the problem, specify the methodology and outline the organization of the study.
• With the advice of your chair, select a thesis examination committee.
• Present your proposal to your committee for approval.
• File your approved proposal with the Program Chair. A signed copy of the cover page of your proposal  must be in your file before you can register for thesis credits.
• Research and write the thesis.
• After all members of your committee have reviewed the document and agreed that it is in "defensible"  form, schedule your oral defense and final examination through the Graduate School.
• After all committee members have certified that you have passed your defense/final examination you  have two weeks to make minor editorial changes and file copies of your completed thesis, signed by all  committee members, with the Graduate School and the Program Chair.

*We recommend you allow one full semester to complete steps 1-6 plus at least one semester to complete steps 7- 9. Completion of the thesis, from beginning to end, generally takes one year, so you should begin the process one  full year before you expect to graduate. The following schedule is highly recommended:*

• First draft due September 15 for fall completion or February 1 for spring completion; • Final draft due November 1 or March 15; and
• Oral defense no later than the week before Thanksgiving or the first week of April.

*Completed thesis must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School and conform to its guidelines.*  Students should plan to undertake research, writing, and defense for thesis, major paper or practicum during the regular academic year (i.e., Fall or Spring terms).  Defenses will NOT be held in the summer terms, as faculty are not available to offer supervision.

While a specific schedule and details, relating to completion of degree requirements will be established by a student's committee chair, there are certain general expectations, which follow.

# Changing Your Degree

Some students decide they would prefer to change degree programs between Urban and Regional Planning and  Public and International Affairs. This can be accomplished without difficulty or loss of time if done during the first  year of study. To change programs:

> • Discuss with your advisor or, if appropriate, the Program Chair;
> • Obtain a change of major form from the GIA Coordinator
> and obtain necessary signatures;
> • Return form to administrative staff; and
> • Get assigned to a new advisor, if necessary.

# Graduation Procedures

SCHEDULE FINAL EXAM/FINAL DEFENSE
All graduate students must schedule a final exam or final defense. Requests to schedule examinations must  include the time, date, building and room number, title of dissertation or thesis, and the names and  signatures of the Examining Committee. These requests are due in the Graduate School at least two weeks  before the examination date requested. Notification of the approval of the examination scheduling and the  examination form/card will be sent electronically to the student and all members of the Examining  Committee. To request, log on electronically https://ess.graduateschool.vt.edu/pages/login.php  The examination should not be conducted if the Advisor has not approved/received notification that the  examination has been scheduled.

GRADUATION FEES
A $25 application fee is charged through Hokie SPA.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE
Complete your application for degree in Hokie SPA by April 1 for Spring or November 1 for Fall commencement. If you do not apply for your degree on time, your name will not appear in the commencement bulletin and there may be a delay in receiving your diploma.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HANDLING DIPLOMA
This form must be submitted, even for those who plan to attend Commencement. The diploma will be mailed  3-4 months after completion (except for Spring graduates). The diploma will be held at the Programs and  Clearances office until this form is received.

SUBMISSION OF FINAL ELECTRONIC THESIS/DISSERTATION (ETD)
Students have two weeks after the date of the exam to submit the electronic copy of the thesis to the  Graduate School office. The Graduate School does not require students to submit Major Papers to the ETD  process. If additional time is needed, the advisor will need to submit a request in writing to the Dean of the  Graduate School indicating the reason and date to be submitted.

RECORD REVIEW
It is strongly suggested that all students stop by the Programs and Clearances office to verify that all records are complete before leaving campus.

START OF SEMESTER DEFENSE EXCEPTION (1 CREDIT HOUR)
This exception allows students to enroll in a special one-credit placeholder for your final semester to defend your thesis, instead of a regular three-credit course as is normally required to receive your degree.To qualify, you must:
- Have been enrolled in at least three credits for the previous semester.
- Have completed all degree requirements except for your final exam.
- Submit a final thesis to your committee during the first three weeks of the semester. Your committee must read it and agree that it's ready for you to defend by the Friday of the third week of classes.
- Submit a Start-of-Semester Defense Exception form by the Friday of the third week of classes or no later than three weeks prior to your exam, whichever comes first.

For additional graduation procedures on the *Blacksburg campus*, please contact the Graduate School, at 231-8636 or  E-mail: grads@vt.edu Website: http://graduateschool.vt.edu/

For additional graduation procedures at the *National Capital Region campus*, contact Elia Amegashie, GIA Coordinator  at elia@vt.edu

# MPIA Grade Policies

| Letter Grade | Numerical Value (GPA) |
|---|---|
| A | 4.0 |
| A- | 3.7 |
| B+ | 3.3 |
| B | 3.0 |
| B- | 2.7 |
| C+ | 2.3 |
| C | 2.0 |
| C- | 1.7 |
| D+ | 1.3 |
| D | 1.0 |
| D- | 0.7 |
| F | 0.0 |

Grades in all courses, assigned one of the letter grades above, are calculated into the overall GPA on the transcript. An additional GPA is calculated for the Plan of Study for each graduate degree. There are, in addition to the above grades, the following grades that do not calculate into the GPA: "I" (Incomplete), "P" (Pass; performance of C- or higher when enrolled for the P/F grade option), "X" (a temporary grade for the first semester in those courses that continue across more than one semester; "EQ" (Equivalent Credit, a "pass" for research or project/report credit); "RG and RP" (Repeat Graduate grades). The "NG" (No Grade, assigned when the student has not done any of the work for the course) and the grade "F" on a course taken Pass/Fail calculate as 0.0 in computing the GPA.

**Policy on the Grade of Incomplete (effective at start of AY 2023-24)**
An Incomplete ("I") grade, which is not calculated in the GPA, may be given when the requirements of a course have not been completed because of illness or extenuating circumstances. It is at the discretion of the instructor whether the circumstances warrant the assignment of an Incomplete. Incompletes should be removed, by completing the course requirements, as soon as possible. Graduate degrees cannot be completed until all ("I") on the Plan of Study have been converted to a passing letter grade.

Students will have up to 6 months to complete any outstanding assignments associated with a grade of Incomplete. Students should make arrangements with the issuing faculty to complete all outstanding assignments as soon as possible and with a firm due date. The program administrator will be notified of any student receiving a grade of Incomplete at the end of the term. At five months, the program administrator will issue notice any students that still has an incomplete on their record. If the assignments are not completed and Incomplete unresolved, at 6 months, the grade will automatically be converted to "F". Extensions may be offered only if

the student submits a written petition to the supervising faculty and the program chair which a) provides documentation justifying why further extension is necessary and b) details plans to complete the assignment. Extensions may also be granted in cases of leave of absence.

The grade of Incomplete can be assigned both for regular taught courses and for research and dissertation hours. Students who receive a grade of Incomplete may not enroll in courses for the following semester without explicit permission of the SPIA school director or the program chair and in consultation with the supervising faculty. Additionally, students who receive a grade of Incomplete are at risk of having their fellowships revoked.

# Assistantship Policies

GRADUATE ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate students on assistantships are required to work the number of hours defined in their assistantship contracts. GAs are assigned by the GIA Program in a manner that best serves program, faculty, and student needs. While every attempt is made to match students with faculty of similar interests, that is not always possible. In addition, the Program has certain needs that require GA support.

The following policies have been the practice of GIA and should be the basis of faculty and student responsibilities regarding GA work:

- It is the responsibility of the faculty to define clearly the manner in which the weekly GA hours are to be assigned and monitored. Some faculty prefer weekly progress meetings, while others set meeting dates less regularly. Both the student and the faculty member should understand the schedule they develop.
- A purpose of the graduate assistantship is to provide students with the opportunities to enrich their academic experiences outside of the classroom setting. This includes supporting faculty research, assisting faculty's instructional duties, participating in public service activities, and providing technological support for faculty or the department.
- GA work commitments do not apply to Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Spring break periods. However, faculty and students may negotiate use of those time periods for GA work to fulfill future or past work commitments.
- Graduate assistants are evaluated at the end of the year to determine whether they should be continued. Failure to fulfill GA responsibilities will result in the loss of the assistantship for the following year.
- In the event a student or faculty member is dissatisfied with their assigned arrangement, the chair and or executive committee of GIA will review the situation and make appropriate adjustments. GAs that change duties are still responsible for any hours not fulfilled by their original assignment. The normal procedure would be a two-week notification to both the student and faculty of any reassignment. Exceptions are at the discretion of the GIA Executive Committee.

- Faculty are not to make work assignments that interfere with a student's ability to progress satisfactorily  toward completion of his/her program. Assignments that require students to miss class, interfere with  normal study schedules, or otherwise place an undue burden on a student's academic performance are  not appropriate.

## CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION POLICY

The Government and International Affairs program values the role of participation and active engagement by  students in the learning process. Moreover, we believe a prerequisite for learning is that students attend class  regularly, participate fully when called upon, and have command of the assigned readings at the scheduled time.  Students missing more than 3 class sessions per course jeopardize their status in the course and may receive an F  (Fail) grade. To accomplish these ends, faculty in GIA are encouraged to evaluate participation by monitoring  attendance, by including class participation in the evaluation of student performance, and by assessing student  comprehension of assigned readings through appropriate means.

## PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING ALLEGATIONS

In the possible event of student allegations of faculty misconduct, the University and the GIA program have  developed procedures for resolving conflicts. It is the belief that most student complaints can be resolved at the  program level. GIA's procedures are intended to help students and faculty achieve resolution. The procedures are  available from the GIA graduate coordinator.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

The Department of Government and International Affairs is committed to the idea of equal opportunity. Virginia  Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, gender,  gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic  information, or veteran status; or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about,  discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees, or applicants; or any other basis protected by law.

# General Information

*For general information about graduate study, contact:*

National Capital Region:
*Professor Ariel Ahram, Program Chair Government and International Affairs, National Capital Region*
900 N. Glebe Rd
Arlington, VA 22203
Phone: 703-706-8113
E-mail: ahram@vt.edu

Blacksburg:
*Professor Timothy W. Luke, Director Government and International Affairs, Blacksburg*
531 Major Williams Hall (0130)
220 Stanger Street, Blacksburg, VA 24061 Phone: (540) 231-6572
Fax: (540) 231-6078
E-mail: twluke@vt.edu


For information about application, assistance with the Graduate School, or degree completion, contact:

Elia Amegashie
*Graduate Program Coordinator*
School of Public and International Affairs
 900 N. Glebe Rd
Arlington, VA 22203
Phone: 571-858-3109
E-mail: elia@vt.edu