

International Development & Human Rights

Bachelor of Arts

Proposed By:

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Introduction

I entered the University of Maryland with the hopes of majoring in Government & Politics and subsequently finding a career on Capitol Hill, ideally working for a member of Congress devoted to a cause I believed in. But several internships, books and many courses later, my passions have veered into other directions. After interning with a development agency in South Sudan, the United States Congress, and the Department of Defense, my views on the world are shifting into a new focus. My internship in the youngest country in the world, South Sudan, showed me the true struggle of consolidating democracy in a politically unstable country, where control for natural resources can quickly become a violent quest for power. My internships with the Department of Defense and the United States Congress shined a light on how the role of America in global affairs has been critical in attempts to establish peace and prosperity throughout what many call “the developing world.”

International development has always been something that piqued my interest, as bettering the welfare of those trapped in poverty and turmoil seems to be a cause of great importance on the global stage. Human beings are entitled to certain rights that cannot be disregarded in pursuit of convenient politics, and international development is an instrument that can be used to ensure those rights are not ignored. Two critical actors in this field are the World Bank and the Chinese government, given its recent economic progress that is spanning across the entire globe. Especially after growing up in Singapore, I was personally able to see the power of international development and how, in part thanks to efforts by the World Bank and the United States, East Asian nations such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore were able to grow to become economic powerhouses. Understanding how such efforts might be emulated in other parts of the world is one of the main objectives of this major.

I am particularly interested in understanding the current development efforts that are ongoing in East Africa. Consisting of relatively new states, having only gained independence during the 1960's, the region offers researchers critical understandings of how democracy works or doesn't work at its most fundamental level. I am also interested in examining how consolidated countries can use aid and investments in developing countries to possibly influence the borrowing countries' political environment. I am interested in aid and investments because they provide quantifiable indicators of how developed countries interact with developing ones. Such a lens will help me understand the Chinese and the World Bank's interactions with developing countries in East Africa, including how

their interactions could impact political changes in the region. It is this growing appetite for an understanding of such complex topics that brought me to the Individual Studies Program.

International Development and Human Rights Defined

International Development & Human Rights is the study of the obstacles and challenges facing developing nations, with emphasis on Sub-saharan and East Africa. Examined are several themes, including the politics of aid, political corruption, and the possibility of growth of civil society. The major will dive into issues of human rights, with special attention to the turbulent political environment in the East African region. The major will also examine the possible relationships between the amount and type of aid a country receives and the level of political instability it is experiencing. With a focus on the political institutions that are currently in many East African states, the major will also examine the issue of how such institutions have coexisted with political leaders who have begun to govern by breaking away from traditional rules laid out in the country's respective constitution. Through the concentrations of development economics, governance and politics, and human rights and African development, this major will enable an understanding of the political, social and economic issues that affect a vast majority of the people living in the East African region.

The **development economics** concentration focuses on the international aid apparatus and the specific obstacles many developed countries face when trying to initiate aid projects in a developing state. This concentration delineates the practices and methods used to help improve human life around the world as well as the challenges that arise. These challenges range from potential corruption within the developing countries to the possible inefficiency of the aid agency, on the part of the donor governments. Also explored are the current paradigms many academics use to theorize development, such as the capabilities approach, Easterly's factor world theory, and Collier's theory on conflict recurrence. Such theories are examined in an attempt to understand the current discussions of the efficiency of aid.

The **governance and politics** concentration aims to provide knowledge of the relationships between a government and its people, and how leadership impacts the stability of political institutions. This concentration also focuses on providing a good understanding of the role of 'strong' democratic institutions of government, and an evaluation of how 'strongmen,' leaders who begin to rule by force, might maneuver around political guidelines in a state with democratic institutions but that may not have consolidated strength and independence. A critical look at the political theories behind such institutions will be essential in this regard. The growth of civil societies in various countries around the world will also be examined to provide a better understanding of how citizens are able to coexist, to collaborate, and even at times to check their own governments.

The **human rights and African development** concentration focuses on issues that are evolving in the East African region and how they are addressed or neglected in development operations. Specific attention will be given to China's expanding political and financial network in the region, with an emphasis on the China-Africa Cooperation. This concentration will also dissect current regional political trends in East Africa, and analyze possible consequences. It will also focus on the implementation of aid and philanthropic projects throughout East Africa. Microfinance institutions will be an area of focus in determining the feasibility of such operations. This concentration will also consider how human rights and African development could affect the political environment in the region.

Learning Objectives and Future Goals

The International Development & Human Rights major combines philosophical, political, and economical concerns in its overall program as well as in specific courses. The major aims to equip students with a critical knowledge needed to understand how state actors encourage development and protect human rights through economic statecraft and multilateral relationships. It emphasizes such broad areas as international development, geo-economics, social justice, political economy, conflict, and human security. These broad conceptual areas are integral components of study in the discipline. The International Development & Human Rights curriculum will ultimately aim to help students:

- Identify the foundational philosophical principles that form the basis of how states define and enforce human rights across the globe
- Develop a critical knowledge of how states can drive development through publicly and privately funded enterprises
- Understand the political, social, and economic context of the East African region and how it has impacted the development processes
- Recognize and analyze the philosophical debates that promote democratic norms as a means to spur development and advance human rights

My learning objectives are to develop a better understanding of the relationship between international development and human rights and to attain a clearer picture of the specific career path that I may want to take going forward. I am currently planning to attain a spring internship at the United States International Development Finance Corporation, a recently formed federal agency which was founded in direct response to concerns over China's growing economic expansion through the Central Asian/African region. I then plan to use this major to start a career in a field that lies at the nexus of international development and international relations.

Capstone

My capstone project will be a research paper that aims to answer the following questions: **Given the growing Chinese expansion of international development projects throughout East Africa, how are their goals and operations different from those of the World Bank in that region? Has China adhered to any of the international norms around prioritizing human rights through international development operations? And are there ways for the international community to incentivize China to adhere to such international norms?**

In order to address these questions, a literature review will be conducted of various articles and whitepapers from groups such as the Center for Global Development, the Brookings Institution, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and their China-Africa Research Initiative. Information will also come from other critical sources, such as constitutions of the Chinese policy banks (including the Chinese Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Export Import Bank, as available). AidData, a research lab at William & Mary that tracks development investments around the world, will also be a critical contributor to the information used in my capstone.

My final research paper will consist of a detailed literature review in relation to the research questions I posed. The paper will aim first to examine the Chinese economic expansion of international development projects throughout East Africa. The paper will also seek to provide a greater understanding of growing Chinese competition to Western-dominated multilateral development banking in East Africa (as represented principally by the World Bank). The paper will conclude with an exploration of ways the international community might incentivise China to adhere to international norms of human rights.

Coursework by Concentration

** previously taken; (CE): currently enrolled*

Development Economics

ECON201 (3) Principles of Macroeconomics: An introduction to how market economies behave at the aggregate level. The determination of national income/output and the problems of unemployment inflation, will be examined, along with monetary and fiscal policy.

HONR228N^(CE) (3) Alleviating Poverty in Developing Countries: The Economics and Challenges of Development Programs.

AREC345 (3) Global Poverty and Economic Development: This interdisciplinary course explores social and economic development around the world. Topics include geography, democratization, political instability and conflict, health and education, agricultural development, micro-entrepreneurship, and an introduction to impact evaluation methods used to evaluate the efficacy of public policy aimed at alleviating poverty.

GVPT354^(CE) (3) International Development and Conflict Management: Serves as the gateway course for the Minor in International Development and Conflict Management. Provides an introductory foundation in the theory and practice of international development and conflict management. Introduces the structures, key players, intersections, and main trends in the evolution of the fields. Explores causal factors that drive economic growth, poverty, inequality, and conflict, as well as the resources, methods, and tools available to track and address these issues.

GVPT359F* (3) Topics in Comparative Politics; Issues in African Development: Also offered as AASP398D, GEOG398A, and SOCY398Y. Credit only granted for AASP398D, GEOG398A, GVPT359F, or SOCY398Y.

Governance & Politics

GVPT200* (3) International Political Relations: A study of the major factors underlying international relations, the causes of conflict and cooperation among international actors, the role of international institutions, the interactions of domestic and foreign policies, and major issues in security, economy and the environment.

GVPT203 (3) The Challenge of Authoritarianism: An introduction to the persistent challenge of authoritarianism. The course explores the nature of authoritarianism and its evolution from ancient through modern times. Students will study how authoritarian regimes vary, why citizens sometimes comply with them, and when and how citizens rebel. The course concludes with a review of contemporary authoritarianism, focusing on its resilience in the Middle East and East Asia and its potential for a resurgence in the US and Europe.

PHIL245* (3) Political and Social Philosophy I: A critical examination of such classical political theories as those of Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Marx, and such contemporary theories as those of Hayek, Rawls, and recent Marxist thinkers.

SOCY432 (3) **Social Movements:** Movements that seek change in the social and political structure of society. Origins, tactics, organization, recruitment, and success. Case studies come from such movements as labor, civil rights, student, feminist, environmental, neighborhood, and gay rights.

GVPT459B^(CE) (3) **Seminar in Comparative Politics; Comparative Political Institutions**

GVPT454H (3) **Seminar in Comparative Politics; Comparative Political Institutions**

GVPT459G (3) **Seminar in Comparative Politics; Weak and Failing States in the International System:** This course will cover the primary theories, concepts, and concerns of weak and failing states in the international system. The course material will address these issues at both the international and domestic levels, demonstrating how they interconnect. Using real-world examples such as Somalia and Afghanistan, the class will link readings to reality, and challenge students to analyze cases at both the component-level and the holistic-level. Topics will include: weak and porous borders, ethnic fractionalization, institutional weakness, secession and irredentism, international spillover of conflict, and more.

PHIL498F* (3) **Philosophy Independent Study:** An Independent Study with Professor Brian Kogelmann on the origins of radical political ideologies that included a case study on Hannah Arendt's work on Totalitarianism in the 20th century.

Human Rights & African Development

GVPT289J^(CE) (3) **Special Topics in Government and Politics; Uncertain Partners: US and China in a Changing World**

ANTH310 (3) **Medical Anthropology and Global Health:** Provides a critical perspective to global health that encompasses key political, economic, and cultural factors associated with the nature and magnitude of global health issues such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, paying particular attention to how poverty and inequalities within and between societies has accelerated current global health challenges. Introduces students to how medical anthropologists have contributed to the debates surrounding the globalization of health.

INAF323* (3) **Democratization and Civil Society In Africa (Georgetown Course):** What do student organizations, church groups, private newspapers, and trade unions have in common? They are all examples of civil society and they have at times played a critical role in challenging oppressive and authoritarian governments across sub-Saharan Africa. Yet in modern Africa critics also charge that civil society weakens the already fragile state and is often undemocratic in its own internal and inter-organizational dynamics. Narrow definitions of civil society have also been challenged in recent times by the advent of NGOs and INGOs, social movements, venture philanthropists, and social media. We will examine how various actors, including donors, social entrepreneurs, and individuals (via social media) influence and change the ways in which society engages with the state.

GVPT356 (3) Capstone in International Development: Serves as one of the two capstone courses for the Minor in International Development and Conflict Management. Focuses on advanced theory and the practice and profession of international development and is designed to provide students an introduction to, and a chance to engage with, a core set of practical skills relevant to the field. (Will be conducting capstone project on a specific issue in the African context)

FGSM380* (3) Responses To Global Challenges: An examination of global issues and responses primarily from the perspective of the practitioner. The focus will be on social, humanitarian, and human rights issues in different global contexts.

GVPT409I (3) Seminar in International Relations and World Politics; The Politics of International and Domestic Human Rights

GVPT484* (3) African Politics: The purpose of this course is to explore the themes, issues, and trends that shape politics in Africa, across 54 countries and over one billion people. I hope the course will inspire in you an interest in African affairs. I also hope it will give you an opportunity to think critically about how context shapes political behavior and about how the sociopolitical world works.

Individual Studies

IVSP317	(1)	Progress Report
IVSP420	(3)	Capstone Project
ENGL398L	(3)	Professional Writing; Writing in the Humanities

Total 300+ Level Credits (excluding IVSP courses): 42 credits in 14 courses

Total Credits (including IVSP courses): 70

Current Status: 18 credits completed, 12 currently enrolled, 37 remaining

Coursework by Semester

Fall, 2018

GVPT354:	International Development & Conflict Management	(3)
GVPT459B:	Comparative Political Institutions	(3)
GVPT289J:	US and China in a Changing World	(3)
HONR228N:	Alleviating Poverty in Developing Countries	<u>(3)</u>
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Winter, 2019

ECON201:	Principles of Macroeconomics	(3)
ECON200:	Principles of Microeconomics	<u>(3)</u>
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Fall, 2019

ENGL393:	Technical Writing	(3)
ANTH222:	Ecological & Evolutionary Anthropology	(4)
AREC365:	World Hunger, Population, and Food Supplies	(3)
ENGL398L:	Professional Writing; Writing in the Humanities	(3)
GVPT454H:	International Relations of China	(3)
PLCY388Q:	International Security	(3)
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Spring, 2020

SOCY432:	Social Movements	(3)
GVPT356:	Capstone in International Development	(3)
GVPT409I:	Politics of International & Domestic Human Rights	(3)
GVPT459G:	Weak and Failing States in the International System	(3)
IVSP420:	Senior Paper	(3)
IVSP317:	Progress Report	<u>(1)</u>
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