International Relations Field Statement

Jim Fearon
International Relations Field Convenor
2019-20

The following requirements apply to students who entered the PhD program in 2019-20 and to students who entered the PhD program in 2017-18 who opted into this system. All other students should refer to the program guide and field statement for the year they entered the program.

Refer to Chapter 2 of the Program Guide for additional important information on the department’s requirements for advancing to candidacy.

Pre-candidacy Requirements for 1st Field International Relations Students

In order to be eligible to advance to candidacy with International Relations as a first field, students must:

1. Complete the IR course sequence (PS 410A, 410B and 410C) for five units each with grades of A- or better.

The course sequence has three main objectives:

• To give students a brief introduction to the large academic literature on international politics, with a view to helping them to prepare for the synthesis and analysis they will be required to carry out in the IR field exam. This is done primarily in PS 410A, 410B and 410C, a three-course sequence that covers IR theory, international security, and international political economy.

• To introduce students to a variety of frontier research problems that animate current work in the field, so that they can see and evaluate examples of how empirical research is actually conducted rather than just commenting on “the classics” or reading pure theory. Thus course syllabi typically mix “classics” and recent articles/books that illustrate the concerns, problems, and potential of current research in IR.

• To help students initiate one or more of their own empirical research projects, to gain practical experience in elaborating a theoretical argument, drawing out testable implications, assembling and analyzing relevant evidence, and presenting the work in stages before colleagues.

2. Complete one elective course for at least 3 units with a grade of A- or higher. Courses on the course options list below are pre-approved to fulfill this requirement. Courses that do not appear on the course options list below must be approved by the Field Convener on the basis of a written syllabus. Students may also fulfill this requirement by doing a directed reading (Poli Sci 319) with the agreement of the sponsoring faculty member and approval from the field convener on the basis of a syllabus.
Classes taught in 2019-20 within the Political Science department that fulfill this requirement are:

- 342 Foreign Policy Decision Making in Comparative Perspective- McFaul
- 460A Political Economy I - Hall, Gentzkow (Econ) prereqs: 450A, 450B, 356A
- 460B Political Economy II- Fearon, Gabriel Carroll (Econ) prereqs: 356A

Other that fulfill this requirement are:

- HISTORY 301A: The Global Drug Wars
- HISTORY 302G: Peoples, Armies and Governments of the Second World War
- HISTORY 304J: Religion, Violence, and Empire (not offered 2019-20)
- HISTORY 310: The History of Occupation, 1914-2010
- HISTORY 338J: The European Scramble for Africa: Origins and Debates
- HISTORY 356: 350 Years of America-China Relations (not offered 2019-20)
- HISTORY 388: Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (not offered 2019-20)
- ECON 266: International Trade I
- ECON 267: International Trade II
- ECON 268: International Finance and Exchange Rates
- ECON 269: International Finance and Exchange Rates II
- SOC 309: Nations and Nationalism
- SOC 378: Seminar on International Society and World Society

3. Comprehensive Exam: Pass the IR comprehensive exam during spring quarter of their second year. We recommend that students planning to take the exam meet with the Field Convenor to ask for advice about how to prepare and what a strong exam looks like.

   We expect that students taking the IR field exam will have read extensively in the literatures of IR theory, security studies, and international political economy beyond the specific materials assigned in 410A, 410B and 410C. To assist with this task the syllabi for these courses will provide suggestions of recommended extra reading that IR students should most likely be familiar with prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

4. Field Paper: Students taking IR as a first field will write a field paper in International Relations. See the Program Guide for additional details on the field paper requirement.

Pre-candidacy Requirements for 2nd Field International Relations Students

In order to be eligible to advance to candidacy with International Relations as a second field, students must complete the IR course sequence (PS 410A, 410B, 410C) for five units each with grades of A- or better.

Pre-candidacy Requirements for 3rd Field International Relations Students

In order to be eligible to advance to candidacy with International Relations as a third field, students must complete two Political Science department courses in International Relations with grades of B or better. These classes must be taken for at least three units each. The courses are to be 3xx or 4xx courses offered by a member of the International Relations field.
Required Minimum Grades

Should a student not receive the required minimum grade in a class taken for their first, second or third field, they may be required to revise and resubmit work associated with the course, retake the course, or take a different course to fulfill the requirement. They may also be advised to switch fields. The appropriate option will be decided by the faculty and communicated to the student by the field convener. All required pre-candidacy course requirements should be completed by the end of the second year in the program so that the student is eligible to advance to candidacy on time. Refer to the program guide for additional information on advancement to candidacy.

Additional Learning Opportunities

Students interested in taking International Relations (IR) as one of their two major fields should also avail themselves of other IR learning and research opportunities. Beyond the core sequence, the department sometimes offers specialized seminars on selected topics in international relations. There are numerous opportunities in a range of workshops, inside the department and also in Stanford research centers, for students to present their own research and to hear presentations by outside speakers.

Of particular importance is the Workshop in International Relations. This workshop features presentations by students, Stanford faculty, and faculty from other leading institutions and is an important forum for students to engage with new and exciting IR research. The workshop offers students an opportunity to further integrate themselves into a professional community comprised of Stanford faculty, scholars from other institutions, and most importantly, student peers at all stages of doctoral work. IR students are strongly encouraged to enroll in and attend the IR Workshop regularly.