Special points of interest:

- Interviews of International Studies students who have participated in various international experiences and their advice to others

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Letter from the Coordinator

The International Studies program just completed its 5-year Audit & Review cycle in May 2014 and I am pleased to report that the evaluating committee gave the program a “clean bill of health.” It also endorsed recommendations made in the Fall 2013 Self-Study that will greatly improve the major. The two most important changes will be adding a new “gateway” course to the major and offering the capstone seminar every semester.

The gateway course will be a 200-level issues-based writing intensive course that will replace the 1-credit Orientation to the Major course. The goal is to provide students the opportunity to enhance their writing and research design skills earlier in their academic careers and make it more likely that they will pursue Undergraduate Research Projects in their junior and senior years. The second change addresses a scheduling problem that has become more acute as more and more majors choose to spend a semester abroad (vs. a 3-credit travel-study course or summer program). These two changes should be in effect by spring 2015.

Other curricular changes include the addition of a 1-credit “Model UN” course, co-taught by Professor Jane Gottlick and myself. We started offering this course in Fall 2014 and plan to attend our first competition, the Arrowhead Model UN competition at UW-La Crosse, in April 2015. The 11 students enrolled in the fall semester course have been working hard to prepare for this opportunity in the spring.

I welcome the assistance of IS major Nana Maiga, who is serving as newsletter editor and who will also assist me in developing a recruitment plan for International Studies students. Nana has interviewed several students who have just returned from studying abroad, a student who is pursuing an exciting internship on water issues, and a student who participated in UW-Milwaukee's United Nations Summer Seminar in 2014. Three IS majors participated in this exciting program last summer. It is particularly appropriate for Public Diplomacy majors, but may be of interest to others as well. The six credits gained through the program may be used to satisfy the International Relations (POLISCI 351) requirement as well as elective credits.

I hope that the stories in this newsletter pique your interest in various ways – new courses, travel, and career options. Please contact me with questions about the program. If you are alumni of the program, I would love to hear what you’re doing!

Happy Holidays!

Anne Hamilton
International Studies Program Coordinator

Congratulations to Spring 2014 and Fall 2014 graduates

Please join me in congratulating the following graduates: Ahmed Abuhasson, Brenton Bach, Alyssa Anderson, Steven Carroll, Rory Cotter, Zach Daniels, Stephen Kasali, Andrew Kelliher, Choua Kue, Milliam Lor, Briea Newman, Travis O’Gallagher, Rolando Rodriguez, Allissa Schellinger, Christian Torres, Ashley Vlack, and Brittany Wendt. We wish them all the best in their new endeavors!
Shirin Bouzari is a junior from Iran who moved to Whitewater in August 2013. When she was in Iran she studied Political Science but she says International relations was always her goal. When she arrived in Whitewater, she chose Public Diplomacy as her emphasis and since then she has taken advantages of the opportunities this major has presented to her.

Shirin took part in the Summer UN Program in 2014. This program is a 6-credit course, which is offered once a year through UW-Milwaukee. In the first week students meet in Milwaukee for one week where they attend a course for one week on the UW-Milwaukee campus. Afterwards, students take a trip to New York with faculty members and for one month they attend the briefings and meetings that take place in the United Nations buildings. They also attend meetings with representatives of different organizations that work for the UN. They have the opportunity to have a Q&A session after each of these sessions. At the end of this program, students are required to give a certain number of summaries from their meetings and they must also submit a research paper on a topic related to the United Nations.

When asked what her most memorable moment was, Shirin explains, “The first day they took us on a tour of the UN, which for me was amazing, I had never done that before. And I think just getting into that building, you dream of being there, it made me feel emotional. I saw a carpet from my country hanging in the entry and that made it even more exciting.” She also recounts how thrilling it was to be in the actual Security Council room where many of the world’s most important decisions are made.

Finally, Shirin strongly urges anyone in International Studies, or not, to travel and learn more about other places. Why? “I think that studying International Studies, you need to know about other places. What is going on in other countries, knowing what’s happening around the world could help you have a vision of what you want to do in the future.”
Ryan Lenz is a student from Madison, WI. He is a senior here at UW-Whitewater and has a number of extracurricular activities such as studying French, travelling and playing in a rock band.

Why International Studies, you ask?

“Travel has become so easy it would be crazy not to do so.”

“I have a seemingly endless appetite for traveling, learning about new cultures through food, language and history. My emphasis is in French. I enjoy expanding my knowledge and skill set in all genres of academia, and life really, that piques my interest.”

Ryan has travelled to England, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Turkey, Italy, Germany and France – 6 times. He has also studied abroad in France.

“I don't find it helpful to think about being in a foreign country as good and bad. Everywhere has its pros and cons, but being in a foreign country is just different. It's new, it's unique, it has its own culture, history, language, food and it's up to the traveller to take it all in and disseminate this new information in a meaningful way. Being in a foreign country is about taking advantage of the experiences you're afforded and, rather than going out of your comfort zone, redefining it.”

Ryan had a number of interesting experiences during some of his trips. He recounts one of his funny anecdotes from travelling. “I once was lost alone in Istanbul at night in a rather questionable part of the old city near Sultanahmet but managed to find my way all the way back to Etiler despite a foggy idea of the city layout and some seriously broken Turkish. Türkiye çok güzel bir ülkedir! I also may or may not have been implicated in a beer mob heist out of the Augustiner tent in München and ended up at the local Polizei in Gauting.”

Adventures with the local police aside, Ryan strongly recommends International Studies to anyone who has an appetite for travel and learning about other cultures. Furthermore, he recommends study abroad to everyone. “The world is globalizing more and more each and every day. Travel has become so easy that it would be crazy not to do so. Living in another culture is so vitally important to understanding that the world around you is so much bigger than the town in which you were raised.”

*If you are interested in Study Abroad, visit the website for the UW-Whitewater Center for Global Education at http://www.uww.edu/international or stop by at their office in Hyland Hall 1227.
Alyssa Anderson is a senior from Wisconsin Rapids, WI. She has an emphasis in General Business and a minor in Spanish and General Management. Alyssa grew up with foreign exchange students at her high school, which had a great influence on her becoming an International Studies major. When asked what she likes most about this major, she said, “I like the variety of classes the major allows you to take. It allows me to focus on business because I want to go into business but it also allows me to take political science courses, which I find super interesting. Also, the electives are very flexible; I’ve been able to take Arabic as one of my electives. It’s nice that I could learn a random language in college, I really enjoy it.” Alyssa took part in a program called Semester at Sea over the summer and it was a real adventure! The program takes place on a cruise ship named the MV Explorer and this is very much like an academic voyage. First, they sailed out of Southhampton to their first port stop, Lisbon, Portugal. On this trip, they went to many European countries including Spain, Scotland, Russia, Ireland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Finland and Poland. During the trips Alyssa took part in many historical experiences such as visiting concentration camps; they spent about 4-5 days in each country. On the ship there were students and professors and other people who refer to themselves as ‘life long learners’ just to experience the cruise. While Alyssa confesses to experiencing some culture shock as they moved along to different countries, the culture shock became less and less as time passed by. She says she felt smarter as they progressed from one country to another and found similarities amongst countries who were close to each other such as Spain and Portugal or the Scandinavian countries.

Alyssa will be graduating this December and she also hopes to, one day, be able to travel and even work internationally. She also plans on staying in touch with the Semester at Sea Program as they have excellent alumni support programs.
Graduate Spotlight: Brittany Wendt

Brittany is 25 years old and a mother to a 5-year old daughter, Gracelyn. She was born and raised in Stoughton, WI. Brittany has already earned an Associate of Arts in Liberal Studies from Madison College and she has been to 10 countries and four continents. She says her choice to International Studies was initially an accident. In her application process, she initially applied to seven different universities for their Anthropology programs and only to UW-Whitewater for its International Studies. She was accepted to all but one and she ultimately chose UWW.

“I really want to eventually do advocacy work,” says Brittany. “I have a passion for helping people and bringing people and communities together. I had my first experience with advocacy work in Ghana in 2006, when I was 16. My emphasis is public diplomacy, so I think it will pair very well with my future career goals.”

Brittany is graduating this December and she already has a position as an intern for the Institute for Water Business in Milwaukee. Her job is to help organize an event known as the Wetskills Challenge. She will be coordinating with the Netherlands and Canada to put this event on in June 2015. She is very excited about her new position and says she has already had an incredible experience. “Today I actually had the most incredible experience of getting to join in on a conference call with the Consulate General in Chicago and the Netherlands to discuss the event. My title is ‘Affiliated Scholar.’ This opportunity real fits my major and is giving me some incredible connections to use in the future,” she shared.

After graduation she plans to sign on with the Institute for Water Business on a program basis to see the Wetskills challenge through. She believes this will really help her with her future employment. She strongly believes in advocating for the environment and she is learning more and more every day.

Brittany believes that the International Studies major has helped her to view the world holistically from every approach, legally, politically, culturally and environmentally.

Once again, congratulations on graduating Brittany and best of luck with all your future endeavors!
Embracing Culture
By: Tyler Heinz

In Japan, a custom that brings a great deal of culture shock to many foreigners comes in the form of public bathing. Luckily for me, before I began my study abroad experience, I knew I would be living in a dorm that had private showers, so the thought of bathing with other people never brought me any grief. One night, the school held an event called “The Night Walk.” At the start we received a map to our next destination, similar to a scavenger hunt. Before we signed up for the event, it was mentioned that we would be traveling a great distance and spending the night in a different area. Thirteen kilometers and five hours later, we discovered that the area was Kansai Gaidai’s second campus, where the dorms are focused more on traditional Japanese student lifestyle. This included sleeping in a room with 25-30 other students, *washiki*, or squat toilets, and of course, a shared shower and bathing room. I stood outside the shower room for a long time having the internal debate about whether I should go without taking a shower or not, but after walking for so long, it was safe to say I needed one. Not knowing how much time had passed outside of the room, I finally built up the courage and decided to embrace the culture and learned that all my prior perceptions had been wrong. While I still found it to be slightly embarrassing, I realized that taking a bath in Japanese culture is a time of relaxation where people are able to clean up, and then put their minds at ease in a warm bath after a strenuous day. I can’t say I will be going to any more bathhouses soon, but I learned that studying abroad and experiencing a different lifestyle firsthand can help broaden one’s horizons and bridge a cultural gap. Something that I had thought was too ridiculous or out of the ordinary was actually something very dear to the people who partake in it on a daily basis.
Did you know that there are a great number of international students on the UW-Whitewater campus? They come from a great variety of countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Brazil, Mexico, Mali, Burkina Faso and many more. This comes as a surprise to many people since Whitewater is such a small town but we do have significant variety of people.

If you are interested in meeting some of these international students and finding out more about where they are from, there are many ways of doing so:

**International Student Association**

The International Student Association is one of the student organizations on campus and, as the name suggests, most of the members are international students. But it is open to everyone on campus who is culturally curious. The ISA meets every two weeks and has a variety of social events throughout the semester. To find out more about this organization, visit [www.uwww.edu/join](http://www.uwww.edu/join).

**International Education Week & International Dinner.** International Education Week is put on by the Center for Global Education and ISA once a year during the Spring Semester. In Spring 2015, it will be from March 2nd to March 6th. Every day there is an event that will be themed based on different countries and their cultural aspects. The International Dinner is always on the last day of the week as the culmination of the Education Week. At the dinner, there are many international meals served accompanied with entertainment from the international students, including dancing, poetry and/or singing from their countries. Ticket sales usually start at the beginning of the Spring semester; if this is something that interests you, you should go to the Center for Global Education in Hyland Hall 1227 and keep a lookout for posters around campus.
College of Letter and Sciences: Upcoming Lecture Series Spring 2015

Mireya Mayor
“‘The Importance of Everything: The Interconnectedness of Wildlife, Humankind, and Our Shared Habitat in Protecting the Planet’”
February 16, 2015
7 P.M. Young Auditorium

Adisa Banjoko
“‘Promoting Youth Empowerment and Non-Violence through Hip Hop, Chess and Martial Arts’”
Monday, March 9, 2015
7 P.M. Young Auditorium

Ellen Gustafson
“A New Understanding of Hunger, Obesity and the Food System”
Monday, April 20, 2015
7 P.M. Young Auditorium