

# NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES, CERTIFICATE

The undergraduate certificate in National Security Studies gives students a structured way to explore how national security decisions are made, who makes them, and what consequences they carry.

Through carefully chosen courses across political science and related fields, students build a foundation in areas like international conflict, diplomacy, military institutions, and decision-making. The goal is not just to learn how the system works, but to understand the tradeoffs, tensions, and real-world stakes behind policy choices.

The certificate is flexible and broadly accessible. It is relevant to students interested in foreign policy, law, public services, and global affairs, and aligns naturally with students in ROTC and military leadership programs.

The program emphasizes both the “hard” side of security like military strategy and the equally important political and diplomatic processes that shape when and how force is used.

By the end, students walk away with a clearer lens for making sense of global events and a practical toolkit for careers in government, international organizations, research, and policy work. In a world where security issues rarely stay in neat boxes, this certificate helps students connect the dots across institutions, ideas, and real-world challenges.

## HOW TO GET IN

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Students are eligible to declare the National Security Studies certificate at any time during their studies. Students who intend to declare the certificate must schedule an appointment with a Political Science undergraduate academic advisor. See the contact information box for details.

Students may not declare both the Political Science certificate and the National Security Studies certificate.

## REQUIREMENTS

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Students must complete at least 15 credits for the National Security Studies certificate. Students must complete at least one course from each of the Political Science (POLI SCI), History (HISTORY), and ROTC (A F AERO, MIL SCI, or NAV SCI) subjects.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Introduction to US in the World</b>		
Complete 1 course from:		3-4
POLI SCI 120	Introduction to Comparative Politics	
POLI SCI 140	Introduction to International Relations	
POLI SCI 182	Introduction to Comparative Politics (Honors)	
INTL ST 101	Introduction to International Studies	

#### The Military

#### ROTC Course

Complete 1 course from:		2-4
A F AERO 401	National Security Affairs	
MIL SCI 401	Leadership and Management	
NAV SCI 402	Naval Leadership and Ethics	

#### L&S Course

Complete 1 course from:		3-4
HISTORY 345	Military History of the United States	
HISTORY 428	The American Military Experience Since 1899	
POLI SCI 338	The Civil-Military Paradox in U.S. Politics and Society	
POLI SCI 343	Theories of International Security	

#### Global Issues and National Security

Complete 2 courses from:		6-8
HISTORY/ ASIAN 319	The Vietnam Wars	
HISTORY 350	The First World War and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Europe	
HISTORY/ ASIAN 363	China and World War II in Asia	
HISTORY 434	American Foreign Relations, 1901 to the Present	
POLI SCI 328	Politics of East and Southeast Asia	
POLI SCI 344	The Russian War on Ukraine: Causes and Consequences	
POLI SCI 345	Conflict Resolution	
POLI SCI 347	Terrorism	
POLI SCI 350	International Political Economy	
POLI SCI 354	International Institutions and World Order	
POLI SCI 356	Principles of International Law	
POLI SCI 359	American Foreign Policy	
POLI SCI/ INTL ST 434	The Politics of Human Rights	
POLI SCI 437	Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict	
POLI SCI 529	Arab-Israeli Conflict	

#### Total Credits

15

## RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- Minimum 2.000 GPA in all certificate courses.
- At least 11 certificate credits must be completed in residence.

## CERTIFICATE COMPLETION REQUIREMENT

This undergraduate certificate must be completed concurrently with the student's undergraduate degree. Students cannot delay degree completion to complete the certificate.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Analyze the institutions, actors, and processes that shape U.S. national security policy, including the roles of the executive branch, Congress, the military, and intelligence agencies.
2. Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of civil-military relations, including the constitutional foundations, tensions, and collaborative dynamics between military institutions and civilian political leaders.
3. Evaluate contemporary and emerging security threats, such as terrorism, cyber warfare, great power competition, and asymmetric conflict, through the lens of political decision-making and strategic planning.
4. Apply theories and practices of conflict resolution and diplomacy to historical and contemporary case studies in international security, peacebuilding, and crisis negotiation.
5. Critically assess the ethical and philosophical dimensions of leadership, military engagement, and national defense, including debates over just war theory, humanitarian intervention, and the use of force.
6. Integrate interdisciplinary knowledge from political science, international relations, military studies, and related fields to formulate policy-relevant insights and communicate them effectively in both written and oral formats.

## ADVISING AND CAREERS

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Talk with the Political Science Academic Program Manager for advising on course selection, questions about declaring, and more.

#### DECLARE THE CERTIFICATE

Students can declare this certificate by following the process described on the Department of Political Science (<https://polisci.wisc.edu/national-security-studies-certificate/>) website.

#### STUDY ABROAD

Learning in Letters & Science emphasizes discovery, growth, understanding different perspectives, and challenging yourself, which makes studying abroad an excellent fit for many L&S students: [studyabroad.wisc.edu](https://studyabroad.wisc.edu) (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/>)

As a university with global influence, we have more than 300 study abroad programs (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/programs/>) in over 80 countries. These vary in length, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and level of independence. There are many programs to complement every major (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/academics/major-advising-pages-maps/#L&S>) and any year of college (including the final semester)—and all meet UW–Madison’s high academic standards. Students admitted into Letters & Science can even choose a short program in the summer before they start college or their whole first year: [studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch/](https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch/) (<http://studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch/>). Talk with your academic advisor about how studying abroad might fit with your academic plan.

#### SUCCESSWORKS

SuccessWorks (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/>) at the College of Letters & Science helps you turn the academic skills learned in your classes

into a fulfilling life, guiding you every step of the way to securing jobs, internships, or admission to graduate school.

Through one-on-one career advising, events, and resources, you can explore career options, build valuable internship and research experience, and connect with supportive alumni and employers who open doors of opportunity.

- What you can do with your major (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/what-you-can-do-with-your-major/>) (Major Skills & Outcomes Sheets)
- Make a career advising appointment (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/>)
- Learn about internships and internship funding (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/>)
- Try “Jobs, Internships, & How to Get Them,” (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/canvas/>) an interactive guide in Canvas for enrolled UW–Madison students