MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY POLICY STUDIES - ONLINE

A master’s degree in security policy studies can open doors to future employment in the security policy institutions of the federal government, in the private sector, in international organizations such as NATO, and in the many nonprofit institutions engaged in security policy work. Security policy studies is a policy-oriented program focusing on international security issues and the policy responses to those issues, with particular emphasis on emerging transnational threats. These threats include but are not limited to weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, regional and ethnic conflicts, international crime, and the security implications of a globalized economy.

The program also examines the national and international policy responses to these problems, including the operations of the intelligence community, the military, diplomats, and international economic policymakers. The curriculum provides a strong grounding in the national security and defense policy-making process. Students choose from four specific concentrations: U.S. national security, transnational security, conflict resolution, and science and technology. The program also offers students the option of completing their MA degree fully online with a concentration in U.S. national security only.

Students also have the option of emphasizing a particular geographic region—such as East Asia, the Middle East, or Latin America—by taking elective courses with a regional focus. Program faculty include internationally recognized authorities in defense policy and resources, foreign policy, the national security policy process, and regional and transnational security issues. In addition, an outstanding array of adjunct faculty is drawn from the many research institutions and policy organizations in the nation’s capital.

Visit the program website (https://elliott.gwu.edu/academics/graduate/sps/) for additional information.

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled: 40 credits, including 6 credits in core field courses, a 4-credit capstone sequence, 0 to 3 credits in research tool courses, 15 credits in U.S. national security specialization courses, 3 credits in professional skills courses, and 9 to 12 credits in elective courses. Students may choose to fulfill requirements that demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language (see below).

See notes regarding special topics and skills courses, the capstone sequence, and the thesis option*.

### Core Field Courses (6 Credits)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6161</td>
<td>International Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAFF 6162</td>
<td>Security Policy Analysis</td>
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### Capstone (4 Credits)

Students complete a two-course capstone sequence that most closely matches the thematic area of their project. The capstone sequence includes a 2-credit capstone workshop taken before the 2-credit capstone seminar. Students must have completed at least 18 credits of coursework prior to starting the capstone sequence. The two 2-credit capstone courses must be taken in consecutive semesters.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6898</td>
<td>Capstone Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAFF 6899</td>
<td>Capstone Course</td>
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### Research Tool Courses (0 to 3 Credits)

Students may choose either a language or a statistical skills option to fulfill the research tool requirement.

- **Language option**—The language option may be completed by fulfilling the language proficiency requirement for ESIA’s non-regional programs**. Additional information about the language proficiency requirements is available from the academic advisor. Students who fulfill the tool requirement without taking any additional coursework will have 3 extra credits to apply to their electives.

- **Statistics option**—This option may be fulfilled by demonstrating proficiency with a minimum grade of B in one of the following graduate-level statistics courses:

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<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6118</td>
<td>Special Topics in International Affairs (Applied Qualitative Methods)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6216</td>
<td>Economic Tools for Global Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6501</td>
<td>Quantitative Analysis for International Affairs Practitioners</td>
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### U.S. National Security Specialization (15 Credits)

#### Required

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6186</td>
<td>Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (U.S. National Security)</td>
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12 credits in courses selected from the following:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6163</td>
<td>Transnational Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6173</td>
<td>Security and Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Civil-Military Relations)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cybersecurity)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cyber Threats and Policy)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Emerging Threats)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Grand Strategy)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Insurgency and Counterinsurgency)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Russia and International Security)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Terrorism Today)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Weapons of Mass Destruction and Arms Control)
IAFF 6222  Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (U.S. Foreign Policy)

Other courses may count toward specialization requirements with approval of the program director.

Professional skills courses (3 credits)

Three 1-credit professional skills courses taken under IAFF 6502 and/or IAFF 6503.

**Electives (9 to 12 credits)**

At least three 3-credit courses from the list below. Students who fulfill the tool requirement without taking any additional coursework must take 3 additional elective credits. No course can be double counted toward the specialization requirement.

IAFF 6108  International Development Policy
IAFF 6138  Special Topics in International Development Studies (Bottom-up Development)
IAFF 6138  Special Topics in International Development Studies (Gender and Development)
IAFF 6163  Transnational Security
IAFF 6171  Introduction to Conflict Resolution

IAFF 6173  Security and Development
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Civil-Military Relations)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cybersecurity)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Emerging Threats)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Russia and International Security)
IAFF 6186  Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Terrorism Today)
IAFF 6222  Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (Monitoring and Evaluation)
IAFF 6222  Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (U.S. Foreign Policy)

Other courses may count toward elective requirements with approval of the program director.

**Optional thesis**

Students who wish to continue to a PhD program or to pursue a research-oriented job may consider writing a thesis, which is an independent, in-depth research project that takes a year or more to complete. To pursue the thesis option, students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 and the approval of the faculty member they wish to have serve as their thesis director. The thesis must be completed in addition to the capstone requirement. Thesis students also must complete at least one research methods course. Thesis credits are counted as elective or specialization/concentration credits with program director approval. The two required thesis courses (below) must be taken in consecutive semesters.

Thesis credits are counted as elective or specialization credits with program director approval.

Required for the thesis option

IAFF 6998  Thesis
IAFF 6999  Thesis

*Specific subject matter covered in special/selected topics courses varies by semester. Consult the Schedule of Classes (http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/) for each semester’s offerings. Topics courses not listed here may, with permission of the program director, be used to fulfill program requirements.

Additional information regarding skills courses (https://elliott.gwu.edu/professional-skills-courses/), the capstone
**The foreign language proficiency requirement may be fulfilled in one of the following ways:**

- Having a minimum grade of **B** in a sixth-semester university-level advanced language course completed no more than three years prior to matriculation in the Elliott School’s master’s degree program.
- Having a minimum grade of **B** in a sixth-semester university-level advanced language course at GW, or in an approved course taken at another institution of higher learning, including Elliott School exchange partner institutions, while enrolled in the Elliott School master’s program.
- Passing the Elliott School-administered foreign language proficiency reading and speaking examination at the currently-required level of proficiency (https://elliott.gwu.edu/foreign-language-proficiency-requirement/). The Elliott School administers foreign language proficiency examinations once in the fall and once in the spring semesters. Students should plan to take the language proficiency examination as soon as possible following their matriculation in the program. Students have three opportunities to pass the examination. Failure to pass the examination for a third time results in dismissal from the program.
- Achieving the required proficiency level in a reading and speaking examination administered by an Elliott School-approved foreign language assessment institution, at the student’s expense, while enrolled in the Elliott School’s master’s degree program.
- Demonstrating the required foreign language proficiency level in a foreign language professional skills course offered through the Elliott School. The instructor tests the student during the course (https://elliott.gwu.edu/foreign-language-proficiency-requirement/) to determine if the required proficiency level has been achieved.