

INScription

Department of International Studies (INS)

Editorial Team:

Mohammad Amaan Siddiqui,
INS Student
Ms. Ghazal Hijazi
Dr. Yuting Wang



WHAT'S INSIDE

MEET THE FACULTY &
STUDENTS

NEW COURSES IN FALL 2022

CONVERSATIONS WITH ALUMNI

EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEET THE FACULTY & STUDENTS



In each issue, we will invite one or two faculty and students to share their feelings about college life or showcase their achievements. Feel free to contact us if you would like to participate! In this issue, we invited one of our faculty and students, Dr. Sammy Badran and Maitri Lalai, to share something about themselves.



Dr. Sammy Badran

I was born in California, lived the first years of my life in Kuwait, but spent most of my childhood in Minnesota. I was never very interested in politics until about my senior year in high school—the same year when the 9-11 terror attacks occurred in the United States. During this tumultuous time, I became deeply interested in international politics and decided to major in political science at the University of Minnesota. I eventually received a PhD in Political Science from the University of Kansas in 2018 and an MA from the University of Hawaii in 2012. Thanks to a Fulbright Research Fellowship, I conducted fieldwork throughout Morocco from September 2016 to May 2017. My upcoming book is based on this fieldwork experience, and, among other things, I explore the implications of my position as a Palestinian-American for my research in Morocco. Specifically, I examine how identity and positionality both assisted my research and led to methodological dilemmas. Besides work, I love traveling, biking, hiking, (trying) to bake, and playing with my son, Noor.



Maitri Lalai

Second year - International Studies major

Music was merely a generational bequeathment to me until I recognized the value it added to my life. My journey is similar to that of any amateur; I began taking lessons in Indian classical music at age 4. At 14, I began pursuing my Honors Degree from Prayag Sangeet Samiti, India.

Working towards two degrees simultaneously has been an enriching experience. Being a classical vocalist has attuned me to notice minute details in everyday life, just as I am required to when practicing music. I've also been able to overcome my fears of being in the spotlight and meeting new people—two skills I think are vital to being an INS major, too!

If music has taught me anything, it is that you can do anything you put your mind to. Decide what it is that you want to achieve, and the means to do so will meet you halfway.

NEW COURSES IN FALL 2022

INS 420 – Social Theory, By Dr. Kurt Mertel (Culture in a Critical Perspective, Economics Major Elective, History Minor Elective, Humanities Requirement, International Studies Major Elective, International Studies Minor Elective, Philosophy Minor Elective)

Prereqs: SOC 201 or POL 201 or PHI 201 and ENG 203 or ENG 204 or WRI 209

FAQs

Is the course hard? It is worth underlining that the course will not assume any prior background in social theory. Nevertheless, given that it is a 400-level seminar, it is designed as an advanced introduction to philosophical foundations of sociology and the social sciences. As such, the course will be of interest to students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including INS, economics, and mass communication, among others.

How will this help my personal and professional life? The course will provide theoretical and methodological tools for analyzing the defining features of modern societies; without a sound understanding of basic social structures and their underlying normative foundations, it is impossible to adequately theorize the role and function of political and economic systems. As a result, students will come away from the course with a more holistic and nuanced understanding of modernity, which is indispensable for successfully navigating an increasingly dynamic, complex and globalized world. The course will thus be particularly useful to those students who would like to enter government, the foreign service and the public sector, as well as to those who would like to pursue graduate studies in the humanities and social sciences.

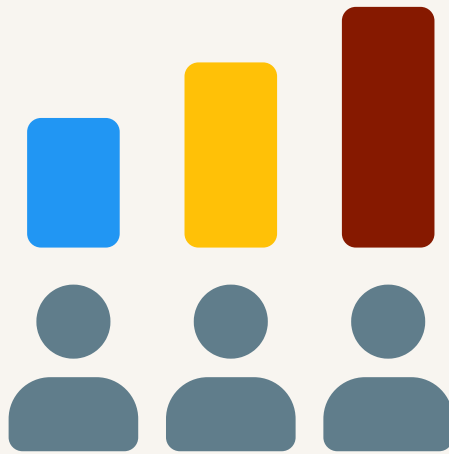
What kind of exams, projects or papers does the course entail? The course will be run as a “student-led” seminar with strong emphasis on discussion and debate between students. In other words, students will be setting the agenda for class discussion each week by providing short presentations on the readings along with questions for discussion. Students will have the opportunity to present a paper to their peers in a workshop setting and receive feedback. They will then incorporate the feedback into a final research paper, which is based on their presentation.

If there was anything that could be pre-read for the course, what should I read?

- Max Weber, The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
- Karl Marx, Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy
- Economy, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts
- Emil Durkheim, On Suicide

Will this course be offered again in Spring 2023? No.





POL 408 – Comparative Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, by Dr. Bethany Shockley. (INS Major Elective, INS Minor Elective, Middle East Studies Minor Elective)

Prereqs: INS 300

FAQs

Is the course hard? The course entails reading two to three book chapters or articles per week. However, the matter is not difficult to comprehend and does not contain math. The course also involves a semester-long student research paper as part of its requirements.

How will this help my personal and professional life? I imagine many students may have had some relevant life experience with politics in the region, so the themes we will cover may hit close to home for some students. We will be looking specifically at the domestic politics of the countries in the region where we currently live and work, so it's good to understand these political systems because sometimes we miss the forest for all the trees. This course will help you to see the bigger themes of politics in the region, such as economic development, social change, public participation and more. Country-specific knowledge can help you in many professional areas. For example, a good understanding of Egyptian politics might help you to do development work, to work in foreign affairs, or set up a business there.

What kind of exams, projects or papers does the course entail? The course includes a semester-long research paper, but you don't have a final exam. Besides that, you will have one midterm, a presentation, and two short reports which will summarize two of the readings of your choice. We don't have any quizzes or weekly assignments as in lower-level classes. However, you will need to turn in your topic idea and your literature review for the research proposal at various points in the semester.

If there was anything that could be pre-read for the course, what should I read? I would recommend that you begin to read and think about the cases and themes in Middle East politics that interest you so that you can plan for your research paper. Keep in mind that this is a comparative politics course and not an international relations course, so we will be talking more about what goes on inside various countries and political systems—such as their social systems, types of elections, and power sharing and less about the geopolitical relationships between countries, although these things are interrelated. For example, you could write a paper comparing elections in Tunisia and Egypt, but not describing the diplomatic relationship between them. Students are welcome to email me with their topic ideas ahead of the start of the course.

Will this course be offered again in Spring 2023? No.

CONVERSATIONS WITH ALUMNI

What happens next after graduating from AUS? Are you interested in pursuing graduate degrees? We invited some of our star alumni who are pursuing master's degrees to share with us their experiences in applying for graduate schools. In this issue, we invited recent INS graduate Maryam Abdelsamie (Class of 2020) to share with us her experiences.



How did you decide which master's program(s) to apply for?

Maryam: Graduating from INS is both exciting and scary because the options for what comes next are unlimited. My choice to study an MA in Education was made shortly after I had completed my undergraduate degree. During my four years in INS, I always knew that a master's program was the next step in order to have a social sciences-oriented career. However, I always debated between many options; sometimes I'd consider international law, other times something related to development studies, and by my final year I was settled on a MA in Sociology or some topic under that. Once I had graduated, I remembered my time interning at the Al Qasimi Foundation (Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research) and realized that the field of work in education research and policy was actually quite interesting and personally fulfilling considering that it had a direct involvement with the community. We can go on to do further studies in any program or land a job in any field, but being an INS student means having the flexibility and adaptability to fit into any new experience. Therefore, I went with the flow of what life had to offer in terms of experiences and picked this program as an opportunity to do plenty of research and eventually give back to the community.

What was your process of research to find the right programs and universities to apply to?

Maryam: Post graduation, I gave myself a few months off free from any job hunting or university searching in order to spend time on myself and my family. After that, I was refreshed enough to dedicate a good two to three months for the whole process from research all the way to application. Firstly, I made use of university worldwide ranking search engines by region and subject area. Next, I collected detailed notes about the programs of my interest, tuition fees, scholarships offered, length of study period, and general courses offered under each program. I also checked universities' social media platforms to check for non-academic opportunities and activities. Next, I began writing my personal statement essays and emailing my professors months in advance to request for recommendation letters. If the university had a specific guideline for the personal statement, I went with that; otherwise, I had a general format. At this stage, I recommend making a separate folder on your desktop or use a USB to neatly store the following: colored passport and residency copies, CV, attested diploma, IELTS/TOEFL results, colored transcript copy, and a general personal statement template. Lastly, I sent in my applications to each university and kept my fingers crossed!

When is the right time to start looking for universities to apply to for one's master's degree?

Maryam: In my opinion, the whole process from research to application takes about two months when you spend an hour every day. Keep in mind that you may need more time after sending in the applications in order to find and apply for scholarships, search for accommodation, and begin the visa application process.

How do you suggest students to manage their university days in order to draft a strong master's application?

Maryam: If you work full time or if you are looking to start your postgrad studies immediately after graduation, you may not have more than an hour daily to spare. Alongside starting research early, I highly suggest staying organized and consistent. Regularly research and collect your application materials for as much time as you can spare daily. Compile all the required documents in one neat folder and make an Excel file of all the possible universities with details on them. Write one general personal statement essay that will be easy to alter and tailor according to specific university requirements later on. Do not wait for approaching deadlines to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

Did you look for scholarships? What was your process for finding them?

Maryam: Personally, I looked into the scholarships offered by each university through their fees and funding page. Many universities offer full ride scholarships, but you will typically need to go for the early application periods. There are also many organizations and private institutions where you can score full or partial scholarships, or look into your respective government's sponsorship plans if available. Similar to program search engines, you can also find scholarship search engines online.

Do you have any other advice you want to give to students?

Maryam: In my experience, applying to grad school was no different than applying to this undergraduate program. Besides everything I've mentioned so far, I'd like to give a final piece of advice. Unlike holding a bachelor's degree, a master's degree is not always an entry level requirement to most jobs. In other words, applying for a master's degree is a very personal decision. Therefore, make the most out of all the resources around you in order to apply to the best school and the best program. Do lots of research and ask around as much as possible (both alumni and prospective departments). If you are in your sophomore or junior year and haven't got a clue about which graduate program you'd like to go for, reach out to our alumni or professors, who are more than happy to help. There are even some university application services out there that specialize in helping send students abroad. Finally, no matter how you go about applying for your graduate studies, always go for the opportunity that is most exciting to you, because I believe that you can always excel if you are passionate about something!

EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

AUSMUN

The 15th Model United Nations at the American University of Sharjah (AUSMUN) took place on February 25-27 on campus. It is one of the most awaited events for high school and college students in the region, as they prepare to debate and convey their stance on pressing global problems.

Click [here](#) to read more about this event.



Course Field Trips

INS 19404 History, Culture and Society of the UAE with Dr. Salma Thani

Earlier this month, Dr. Salma Thani and her students in INS 19404 visited the Etihad Museum to learn more about the UAE, its past, and its heritage. Ghada Mostafa, an exchange student, found it particularly interesting. She said, "As an exchange student from the United States, I found it significantly interesting to visit the location where the founding sheikhs of the United Arab Emirates gathered to establish the independent, sovereign country we see today. It is interesting to picture that just a few decades ago, the UAE was nothing like it is today, with advances in every aspect such as infrastructure, technology innovation and many more."



Psi Chi | Week of Psychology

In collaboration with the Entrepreneurship Club, Psi Chi held a research talk presented by Dr. Craig Talmage, a professor at Hobart and Williams Colleges, introducing students to the field of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. The event was held as part of the Week of Psychology in collaboration with the Psychology Club, exploring lesser-known fields of psychology. Combining aspects of both business and psychology, the talk included a background on I/O Psychology, discussed both the organizational and industrial aspects of the field, and explored how these two aspects relate to entrepreneurship and other human factors. Dr. Talmage included many activities during his speech, facilitating collaboration and helping students relate the field to their experiences.

Also as part of the Week of Psychology, Psi Chi featured Dr. Jelle Sijtsema, a forensic psychologist, on their Instagram page. Dr. Sijtsema filmed a short video introducing the field of forensic psychology and answering some commonly asked questions for students interested in the field.

Psychology Club | Art Therapy with Ms. Najah Musthafa

On March 16, Art Psychotherapist Ms. Najah Musthafa spoke on the common misconceptions and myths regarding Art Therapy and the neuroscience behind this form of therapy. In the activity component of the event, students were instructed to draw themselves or their loved ones as fruits and/or vegetables.



INSA Gala 2022

The International Studies Student Association (INSA) hosted the return of its annual INSA Gala Dinner in collaboration with the Psychology Club on March 22, 2022 at the ESB Gazebo. Themed “Carnival: Party Like You’re in Brazil!”, the gala was a night of vivid music, karaoke and laughter as we celebrated our fellow INS and PSY Class of 2022 graduates.





UPCOMING EVENTS!

Events listed below are subject to change

Department Colloquium - Dr. Meghan Tinsley
Wednesday, April 6 | 5:00 – 6:00pm

Student Research Presentation
Tuesday, April 19 | 1:00 – 2:00pm

Psi Chi Induction Ceremony
Thursday, April 21 | 5:00 – 8:00pm

Contact Us!



INSA - [@insa_australia](https://www.instagram.com/insa_australia)
Psi Chi - [@psichi_australia](https://www.instagram.com/psichi_australia)
AUS Model UN - [@aus_modelun](https://www.instagram.com/aus_modelun)
Psychology Club - [@auspsychclub](https://www.instagram.com/auspsychclub)
AUS Model Congress - [@ausmodcongress](https://www.instagram.com/ausmodcongress)
Department of International Studies - [@institutions_australia](https://www.instagram.com/institutions_australia)



INSA - insa@aus.edu
AUS Model UN - info@ausmun.com
AUS Model Congress - contact@ausmodcongress.com
Department of International Studies - internationalstudies@aus.edu
Psychology Club - psychologyclub@aus.edu
Psi Chi - psichiclub@aus.edu



Department of International Studies - 06 - 515 2823