The IR Department’s learning objectives reflect the mission of our program which is to prepare undergraduate and graduate students to enter a competitive workforce in government, business, and non-profits, or to pursue advanced graduate training leading to a Ph.D. in the International Relations field. The International Relations Department at SFSU, one of the oldest IR programs in the nation, seeks to train students who possess strong analytical skills and theoretical knowledge predicated on an interdisciplinary approach to international affairs. Our faculty also attempt to precisely and clearly communicate their expectations in terms of learning outcomes to students.

**Learning Outcomes**

Our department learning goals are achieved through completion of IR core courses and electives in a wide variety of topics, including but not limited to fundamental of IR theories, international political economy, European Politics, Middle Eastern Politics, Latin American Policy Analysis, international security, International Media Politics, US Foreign Policy, Geopolitics and Globalization, the Rich and the Poor Nations, and Human Rights. Our stated learning objectives are:

- To impart knowledge of basic concepts, theories, and methods in international relations.
- To train students in research, analytical, and presentation/communication skills. We train our student to apply the knowledge acquired in this course to explore issues such as social change, globalization, climate change, international trade, peaceful democratic change, technology diffusion, democracy promotion, and social media, and conflict resolution.
- Use tools of critical analysis to address, identify, and analyze the sources of social change, modernity, nationalism, and populism throughout the world, while also offering policy recommendations to policymakers in this regard. Our students are required to give a single or group presentation in each class to sharpen their communicative skills.

Graduate student learning goals are achieved through enrollment in core and elective courses that are taught seminar style and many of which require 20-25 page papers as final assignments. The reading components of graduate courses are generally double the amount of reading assignments expected at the undergraduate level and the syllabi reflect sophisticated and complex sets of books and articles. Class participation, debates and presentations in seminars reflect analysis and critical thinking skills of the graduate students. The Culminating Experience papers generally reflect the ultimate learning achievements of the students in knowledge, skills, experience, research and analysis in International Relations.
**Assessment Plans**

Our plan of assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes centers on the successful completion of core (19 credits) and elective/complementary courses (18 credits), as well as a culminating requirement (IR550 Senior Thesis, that counts for 6 credits and is essentially the major’s capstone course). IR550 is a senior thesis on a topic of individual student’s choice regarding a major theme, issue, and/or a region in the international relations.

The IR Department’s learning goals were developed and revised through setting departmental goals and inter-departmental communications and faculty meetings. The curriculum committee dealt with adding GE components to some of our current courses and added new courses, as well as revised courses/programs. Several factors guided the curricula revisions, of which the most important one was to adopt a new focus on decreasing time to degree (fast-tracking graduation).

The IR MA program fosters an environment where graduation is encouraged. The department has averaged 13 graduations per year, which is a solid rate for a program that admits 13-14 students annually. There have been fluctuations in the number of students that graduate in some years due to differential culminating experience completion rates and personal and financial challenges of the cohorts. As of 2017, however, we are graduating as many students as we admit. The department credits the advising efforts and the graduate orientations provided by the Graduate Coordinator for the rise in graduations over the last three years.