The mission of our M.A. graduate program is to prepare 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 graduate students who possess strong analytical skills and theoretical foundation established through an interdisciplinary approach to international affairs.

The Master’s degree program is focused on training our students to be professionals who work in the field of international relations, including in government service, non-profit sector, and international organizations. Our curriculum emphasizes the coordination of theory and data. Many courses in the curriculum study specific areas of the world from diverse theoretical, historical, and contemporary perspectives, emphasizing the dynamic interaction between IR theory and foreign policy, political economy and international security, non-state and transnational actors.

Classroom instruction emphasizes knowledge of core International Relations concepts and theories as well as thematic issues, including but not limited to international political economy, international security, international law, governance, and human rights. There are two tracks for graduate students: an academic track, where the culminating experience is a thesis, and a professional track where students undertake an internship experience that culminates in a research paper. For graduate students choosing the professional emphasis, the Department provides resources toward internship opportunities and supervises the preparation of an academic paper based on their internship experiences.

Upon graduation, IR students will have achieved mastery of core International Relations concepts, theories, and methods, and will have one or more areas of special competence. Graduate students are trained to critically engage regional and international dynamics, in a wide variety of issue areas such as gender, environmental studies and human security. The M.A. Program builds future leaders who are able to seek innovative solutions to the most pressing problems in international relations through a curriculum that emphasizes creativity, cross-cultural understanding and critical thinking. Equipped with research, analytical and presentation, communication and professional skills, including report writing, data analysis, public policy analysis, oral briefing and audio-visual production techniques, our M.A. student graduate will be ready for the next step in their careers. There are several areas of emphasis, both regional—Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America—and thematic—environment, security, terrorism, development, and human rights—that prepare students from diverse theoretical, historical, and contemporary perspectives.