

New U.Va. Global Studies Major to Deepen the Student Experience

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Nicholas Masters, a third-year University of Virginia student from Chesapeake, is one of at least 100 students who will have a new opportunity to study deeply intricate international issues through the school's new **global studies major**.

"One of my primary reasons for applying was to study complex international issues – primarily genocide and other instances of mass violence – beyond a historical context," said the history major, who is adding a major in global studies security and justice to his transcript.

"I'm hoping that the major will expose me to new schools of thought and will allow me to engage with students and professors from a wide variety of academic backgrounds and with diverse interests to better understand the issues that are gripping the world," he said.

There is no shortage of real-world examples of the type Masters describes.

"The news this summer has actually been full of 'security and justice' controversies, including claims of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-perpetrated genocide in Iraq, arguments about who has a popular and legal mandate to do what in Ukraine, and a debate about whether child migrants to the U.S. should be treated as refugees fleeing narco-terrorism," said **Peter Furia**, director of the new program's global studies security and justice track. "Students are understandably interested in these complicated, yet, I would argue, related issues, but in the past they've sometimes fallen through the cracks of the undergraduate curriculum."

The new global studies major is an outgrowth of the global development studies major, a **student-created program** that has been directed by anthropology professor **Richard Handler** since 2009. In 2011, in partnership with the **Department of Public Health Sciences** in the **School of Medicine**, that program created a concentration in **global public health**.

Global development studies and global public health will now become concentrations in the new major, along with Furia's new **security and justice** track and a new **environments and sustainability** track, directed by **Phoebe Crisman**, associate professor of architecture.

The new interdisciplinary and inter-school major will be formally housed in the **College of Arts & Sciences**.

Second-year students must **apply** to enter the program for their third and fourth years. "We ask

students to write an essay, and we look at their transcripts to see what courses they've taken and their grades," said Handler, who is overseeing the new program. "And we pay some attention to their service activities. But the essay is the most important. We're looking for kids who want a serious liberal arts education and who are asking smart questions about global issues."

Students in the program are encouraged to study abroad in the second semester of their third year. The **International Studies Office** provides suggestions for **study-abroad opportunities** in the new major as well as many more.

The global development studies and global public health programs have graduated four classes of students since 2001, about 120 students.

Handler said the first destinations of the students have clustered in four areas: development, business (especially consulting), graduate study in professional schools and service organizations like New Sector Alliance, the Peace Corps and Teach for America.

"I would expect students in the new tracks to continue in this pattern, with some variation due to special interests in such things as international politics and environmental policy," he said.

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