

MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY POLICY STUDIES

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 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, the program includes an outstanding array of adjunct faculty 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.

ADMISSIONS

Admission Fall: January 7th - Fellowship & Application Deadline deadlines:

Spring: October 1st - Fellowship & Application Deadline

Applications for admission will continue to be accepted on a rolling basis after the fellowship deadlines have passed, but students will not be considered for fellowships.

Standardized GRE/GMAT test- optional test scores:

Recommendations (2) letters are required. Applicants should submit one (1) academic letter from a professor and one (1) professional reference.

Prior academic records: Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended should be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission and choose to enroll.

If academic records are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translations alone should be uploaded into the online application. Official transcripts and certified English translations will be required of applicants who are offered admission and choose to enroll.

Statement of purpose: All applicants are required to submit an essay of approximately 500 words that answers one of the two questions below:

State your purpose in undertaking graduate study at the Elliott School. As part of your statement of purpose, describe your academic and research interests, career objectives, how a degree from the Elliott School will enable you to achieve your goals, and what unique skills, talents and/or perspectives you will bring to your program. Please be specific.

- OR -

Please discuss an issue of international importance you wish to address in your professional career. Please include how the Elliott School and the academic program to which you have applied will prepare you to address this global issue.

Additional requirements A resumé or curriculum vitae is required. Resumés/CVs must include dates of employment (if applicable) and date of degree conferral or expected degree conferral.

International applicants only: International Applicants may be required to submit official English Language tests scores with their application. Please see the Elliott School's English Language Requirements for guidance on whether you need to take the TOEFL/IELTS/PTE. Please send official TOEFL scores to institution code 5246.

The minimum English Language Test Requirements can be found below:

Eligible for Admission & requires EAP Courses:

- IELTS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.0

- TOEFL- 100 (internet test) 600 (paper test)

- PTE- 68

Eligible for Admission & Exempt from EAP Courses**:

- IETLS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.5

- TOEFL- 105 (internet test) 650 (paper test)

- PTE- 72

**Spring applicants must receive at least these scores to be considered for admission.

Please review International Applicant Information carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Office of Graduate Admissions
The Elliott School of International Affairs
The George Washington University
1957 E Street, NW, Suite 301
Washington, DC 20052

Contact for questions:

esiagrad@gwu.edu ~ 202-994-7050 (phone) ~ 202.994.9537 (fax)
9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

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 a concentration, 3 credits in professional skills courses, and 9 to 12 credits in elective courses. Students may choose to fulfill the tool requirement by demonstrating language proficiency*.

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

Code	Title	Credits
------	-------	---------

Required

Core field courses (6 credits)

IAFF 6161	International Security
-----------	------------------------

IAFF 6162	Security Policy Analysis
-----------	--------------------------

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.

IAFF 6898	Capstone Workshop
-----------	-------------------

IAFF 6899	Capstone Course
-----------	-----------------

Tool requirement (0 to 3 credits)

Students may choose either a language or an appropriate analytical option to fulfill the tool requirement.

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.

Analytical option—This option may be fulfilled by demonstrating proficiency with a minimum grade of B in a graduate-level methods course. It may be met by taking one of the following. Other courses may be counted toward this requirement with approval of the Program Director:

GEOG 6304	Geographical Information Systems I
-----------	------------------------------------

IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Data Analytics for International Affairs)
-----------	--

IAFF 6501	Quantitative Analysis for International Affairs Practitioners
-----------	---

IAFF 6198	Special Topics in International Economic Policy (Advanced Quantitative Analysis)
-----------	--

Concentration (15 credits)

Five courses in one of the following concentrations:

U.S. national security

Required

IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (U.S. National Security)
-----------	--

Concentration courses

HIST 6051	Re-thinking Cold War History
-----------	------------------------------

HIST 6330	Modern U.S. Foreign Policy
-----------	----------------------------

IAFF 6106	Nuclear Weapons
-----------	-----------------

IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Civil Wars in World Politics)
-----------	--

IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Gender and Security)
-----------	---

IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (International Law and the Use of Force)
-----------	--

IAFF 6145	U.S. Space Policy
-----------	-------------------

IAFF 6148	Space and National Security
-----------	-----------------------------

IAFF 6160	Defense Policy and Program Analysis
-----------	-------------------------------------

IAFF 6163	Transnational Security
-----------	------------------------

IAFF 6165	Fundamentals of Intelligence
-----------	------------------------------

IAFF 6169	Homeland Security
-----------	-------------------

IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Artificial Intelligence and International Security)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Counter-Terrorism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Countering Violent Extremism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cyber Threats and Policy)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Great Power Competition)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Maritime Security and Threats)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Military Power and Effectiveness)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (NATO's Strategic Challenges)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Nuclear Proliferation and Nonproliferation)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Nuclear Strategy)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Piracy and Irregular Threats)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Violence and Terrorism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Russia and International Security)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Strategic Planning for the 21st Century)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (The Analysis of Military Operations)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (The Chinese Military)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Understanding U.S. Special Operations)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (U.S. Grand Strategy)

IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (WMD and Arms Control)
IAFF 6318	Special Topics in Asian Studies (South Asia and Regional Security)
IAFF 6358	Special Topics in Latin American and Hemispheric Studies (Security in the Americas)
IAFF 6521	U.S. Foreign Policy Summer Program
PSC 6467	Asian Security
Other courses may count toward concentration requirements with approval of the program director.	
Transnational security	
Required course	
IAFF 6163	Transnational Security
Concentration courses	
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Gender and Security)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Gender, War, and Peace)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Post-Conflict Justice and Peace-Building)
IAFF 6138	Special Topics in International Development Studies (Global Food Security)
IAFF 6138	Special Topics in International Development Studies (Human Trafficking)
IAFF 6138	Special Topics in International Development Studies (Violence, Gender, and Humanitarian Assistance)
IAFF 6164	Environmental Security
IAFF 6169	Homeland Security
IAFF 6173	Security and Development
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Artificial Intelligence and International Security)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Counter-terrorism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Countering Violent Extremism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cyber Threats and Policy)

IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Illicit Finance and Security)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (International Organized Crime)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Maritime Security and Threats)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (NATO's Strategic Challenges)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Piracy and Irregular Threats)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Violence and Terrorism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Strategic Planning in the 21st Century)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Transnational Organized Crime)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Understanding U.S. Special Operations)
IAFF 6318	Special Topics in Asian Studies (South Asia and Regional Security)
IAFF 6358	Special Topics in Latin American and Hemispheric Studies (Security in the Americas)
IAFF 6378	Special Topics in Middle East Studies
IAFF 6385	Special Topics in African Studies (Transnational Threats in Africa)
PSC 6467	Asian Security
Other courses may count toward concentration requirements with approval of the program director.	
Science and technology	
Required course	
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Emerging Threats)
Concentration courses	
IAFF 6106	Nuclear Weapons
IAFF 6107	The Science of Nuclear Materials

IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Managing the World's Water)
IAFF 6138	Special Topics in International Development Studies (Global Food Security)
IAFF 6143	Science and Technology Policy Analysis
IAFF 6145	U.S. Space Policy
IAFF 6148	Space and National Security
IAFF 6153	Science, Technology, and National Security
IAFF 6158	Special Topics in International Science and Technology Policy (Artificial Intelligence and Policy Challenges)
IAFF 6158	Special Topics in International Science and Technology Policy (Science Diplomacy)
IAFF 6164	Environmental Security
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Artificial Intelligence and International Security)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cyber Security)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cyber Threats and Policy)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Great Power Competition)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Nuclear Proliferation and Nonproliferation)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Nuclear Strategy)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Strategic Planning in the 21st Century)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (The Analysis of Military Operations)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Understanding U.S. Special Operations)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (WMD and Arms Control)
IAFF 6318	Special Topics in Asian Studies (South Asia and Regional Security)
IAFF 6385	Special Topics in African Studies (Peace and Conflict in Africa)

LAW 6877	Nuclear Nonproliferation Law and Policy (3 credit course only)
MGT 6290	Special Topics (Hacking for Defense)
PSC 6467	Asian Security
Other courses may count toward concentration requirements with approval of the program director.	
Conflict resolution	
Required course	
IAFF 6171	Introduction to Conflict Resolution
Concentration courses	
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Civil Wars in World Politics)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Conflict Prevention)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Foundations of Humanitarian Action)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Gender and Security)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Gender, War, and Peace)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (International Law)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (International Law and Use of Force)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (International Peacekeeping)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Managing the World's Water)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Post-conflict Justice and Peace-building)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (Stabilization and Peacebuilding)
IAFF 6118	Special Topics in International Affairs (United Nations Reimagined)
IAFF 6138	Special Topics in International Development Studies (Human Trafficking)
IAFF 6138	Special Topics in International Development Studies (Violence, Gender, and Humanitarian Assistance)
IAFF 6164	Environmental Security

IAFF 6173	Security and Development
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Countering Violent Extremism)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency)
IAFF 6186	Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)
IAFF 6318	Special Topics in Asian Studies (South Asia and Regional Security)
IAFF 6358	Special Topics in Latin American and Hemispheric Studies (Security in the Americas)
IAFF 6385	Special Topics in African Studies (Peace and Conflict in Africa)
LAW 6534	Law of the European Union (3 credit course only)

Other courses may count toward concentration 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 substantive 3-credit courses.

Optional Thesis

Students who wish to continue to a PhD program or to pursue a research-oriented job may consider writing a thesis in addition to the capstone requirement. The thesis 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. 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.

IAFF 6998	Thesis
IAFF 6999	Thesis

** Language proficiency requirement

Students may fulfill this requirement in one of the following ways:

- Having earned 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 earned 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 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 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 language assessment institution, at the student's expense, while enrolled in the Elliott School's Master's Degree Program.
- Demonstrating the required 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.

*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 (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/global-capstone/>), and the thesis (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/thesis/>) is available on the Elliott School website.

COMBINED PROGRAMS

Combined Programs

- Joint Master of Arts in Elliott School programs and Master of Business Administration (<https://bulletin.gwu.edu/international-affairs/graduate-programs/joint-mba-ma-international-affairs/>)
- Joint Master of Arts and Juris Doctor (<https://current.bulletin.gwu.edu/international-affairs/graduate-programs/joint-ma-jd/>)