

Graduate Education

Master's Degrees in International Affairs: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



- **GETTING READY:
FIRST STEPS**
- **CHOOSING A PROGRAM:
10 QUALITIES TO CONSIDER**

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Getting Ready: First Steps

Does this profile sound like you?

You have work experience: Maybe an entry-level job or two; maybe several years of experience. Maybe you have also done an internship involving international affairs.

You have spent time abroad—not just traveling, but studying, working, or volunteering. You have studied a second language, or maybe you are already fluent in more than one language.

You want to advance in a career. Maybe you also yearn to help make the world a better place.

Your interests might include economics, diplomacy, development, security, global policy, or a particular region of the world. You might be interested in careers that bridge the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Is it time to go for a master's degree in international affairs?

What would you want to gain from graduate school? What value could you create from the experience? What knowledge and skills will prospective employers be looking for?

In thinking about those questions, you can start with three steps to get ready for grad school:

1. Research Your Goals

"I am amazed by the number of people who think they know what they want to do but have not done enough research," says Phillip McMullen, director of career services at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. "Often a prospective student is making too many assumptions without enough data."

He cites a common example: A Peace Corps volunteer had a wonderful experience in, say, East Africa, and now plans to eventually work for the State Department or the United Nations but doesn't know a whole lot about the jobs there.

"If you research it first, that would put those choices in perspective," says McMullen.

His advice: "Find someone who knows what you would be doing there and what skills are needed. Also use tools like Google and LinkedIn to find people who are doing what you think you want to do. Look at their backgrounds."

Top photo: Steve Roach, senior fellow, Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, Yale University, talks with a student. Roach is former chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia.

2. Get Connected

If you don't already have work experience in a field that interests you, an internship prior to grad school could be very helpful. It could allow you to see how people in the field spend their time, learn how well you like the work, and make contacts in the field.

"The students who do best in our programs have had an internship in their field of interest," says Brad Miller, director of graduate admissions at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

To find an internship, think about the people you know who could serve as a starting point in your search. You might contact a faculty member from college, for example, or a high school history teacher.

"I push people very hard to get an internship in the kind of job they think they would want," says Gihan Fernando, executive director of the American University (AU) Career Center. Close to 70 percent of AU undergrads pursue an internship.

An internship experience can be a great opportunity to cultivate mentors. "During an internship, be proactive about developing a relationship with someone who can act as a guide and write letters of recommendation," Fernando advises.

3. Hone Your Skills

How much practice have you had giving oral presentations? Are you skilled at writing a concise business memo, not just academic papers? Graduate school in international affairs is an opportunity to develop not only knowledge, but also the skills employers will value.

"You can't underestimate the value of the ability to communicate, both orally and in writing," notes Jennifer Windsor, associate dean for programs at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS). "The ability to write a succinct memo is emphasized in all of our programs," says Windsor, who also oversees the Graduate Career Development Center at SFS.

"Organizations are looking for someone who can write a short, effective briefing memo," says McMullen. Some courses at Fletcher include practice writing briefing memos, but it helps to have prior experience in non-academic writing. McMullen even suggests taking a course in fiction writing before starting grad school.

Another suggestion from McMullen is to take a short course in oral presentation, perhaps at a community college. This fall, he says, Fletcher will offer a new course focusing on oral communication.

"You can't underestimate the value of the ability to communicate, both orally and in writing."

— Jennifer Windsor, associate dean for programs at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS)

In addition to communications skills, statistical skills are in demand. “Employers tell us they are looking for professional writing skills and statistical skills—the tricks and techniques for working with data,” says Miller. That’s why the Josef Korbel School has recently revamped its curriculum to add more statistics courses.

Many programs require additional quantitative skills. UC San Diego’s School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) recommends that students take macroeconomics, microeconomics, statistics, and calculus before starting the program, but the requirements are flexible. The school offers a summer course in quantitative methods for entering students who need to strengthen their background.

Whatever your background and goals, it takes time to explore the nuances of different programs. “Good candidates often contact the school six months before the application deadline,” says Miller.



Dining hall at the Monterey Institute of International Studies

Choosing a Program: 10 Qualities to Consider

In exploring master’s degree programs in international affairs, it isn’t enough just to compare courses, approaches, and opportunities beyond the classroom. You will want to get a feel for the community of students, faculty, and alumni who may remain a key part of your professional network for decades to come.

What are your priorities in choosing a program? Consider these 10 qualities:

1. Tight-Knit Cohorts

“The students are the most important element of any school,” says James Reardon-Anderson, acting dean of **Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS)**. “I am always struck by the students here and by the level of support and enthusiasm of the alumni.”

Although SFS graduate students can take classes anywhere in the university, they are enrolled in eight separate master’s degree programs, each with its own faculty, its own physical space, and, significantly, its own student lounge.

The five regional MA programs at SFS have 40 to 50 students each, as does the MA in Global Human Development. Nearly 200 students are pursuing the Master of Science in Foreign Service, and more than 300 are pursuing the MA in Security Studies. Since they are all two-year programs, each entering class has about half those many students.

Reardon-Anderson believes a key feature of SFS graduate programs is their relative smallness. “Students develop very tightly knit cohorts,” he says. “I am really impressed by the community spirit of these eight graduate programs. Students develop very tight bonds.”

Students also develop close bonds with faculty and staff. “Students get intensive advising and individualized attention from professors,” says Jennifer Windsor, associate dean for programs. In addition, the school’s academic advisors, directors, career center staff, and alumni who work with students all communicate with one another about the guidance they provide.

2. Career Networking Opportunities

Field work combined with policy studies provided a strong background for Christine Carlson-Ajlani, who served in the Peace Corps in Morocco during her studies at the **Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS)**. She was enrolled in the Peace Corps Master’s International (PCMI) program, in which students do 27 months of Peace Corps service while pursuing graduate studies at one of 80 U.S. institutions.

Carlson-Ajlani received her Master of Public Administration from MIIS last year. She then landed her dream job with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking in the International Labor Affairs Bureau.

“It’s pretty great working across the street from the Capitol Building in the heart of international policymaking in D.C.,” says Carlson-Ajlani. She oversees \$12 million in U.S. government grants to combat child labor in Morocco and Jordan and is conducting research on efforts to address child labor issues in the region.

Meanwhile, in a new MA program in International Trade & Diplomacy, MIIS students will spend their first two semesters in Monterey and their final semester in Washington. The program will prepare them for careers in a variety of organizations, from agencies such as the U.S. Department of Commerce to companies like Apple and Cisco Systems.



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Brittany Franck, student at the Josef Korbel School, working with vision-impaired students in Ethiopia

3. Connections to Field Work

After earning her BA, Brittany Franck went to Germany as a Fulbright scholar. She learned German, taught English, did literary research, and took courses in cultural diplomacy. Next she spent two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia addressing the health and education needs of vision-impaired students. Now, Franck is pursuing an MA in International Development at

the **University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies**. The Josef Korbel School attracts more return Peace Corps volunteers than any other grad school.

As part of her studies, Franck is pursuing a certificate in Global Health Affairs at the Josef Korbel School and taking classes at the University of Denver's School of Education. This summer, however, she is back in Ethiopia with the Peace Corps, setting up a health clinic at the school where she had previously served.

Franck has become fluent in the Tigrinya language of northern Ethiopia, and she hopes to eventually settle permanently in Ethiopia.

She has little interest in becoming a policy wonk. "I like to be an instrument of what people are trying to implement on the ground," she says. "You can get immediate feedback from your community."

4. Global Exposure

In some U.S.-based graduate programs in international affairs, up to 50 percent of students come from outside the United States. At **IE School of International Relations** in Madrid, nearly 80 percent are from outside of Spain. Core courses are taught in English, while students also have the option to learn either Spanish or French.

The school's 10-month Master in International Relations (MIR) program, now in its seventh year, is designed to transcend the



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Margaret Mead

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“I came to Korbel because it’s a place where new ideas and different ideas are brought about – it’s not just about a set curriculum.”

- Kyleanne Hunter
M.A. Candidate
Sié Fellow

Kyleanne Hunter is a former officer in the United States Marine Corps, serving as an AH-1W Super Cobra attack pilot. Now she’s a Sié Fellow at the Josef Korbel School’s Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security & Diplomacy. As such she’s working alongside world renowned faculty doing relevant research on today’s most pressing global issues.

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traditional distinctions between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Each cohort has about 25 students, who take classes together in international relations, economics, and business. Students also benefit from the school's close relationship with IE Business School.

"Having access to the resources of one of the world's top-ranked MBA programs gives MIR students an advantage in understanding crucial elements of the international system, which translates into deeper understanding of current global issues," says Rowan Palmer, class of 2013.

MIR students also travel to Brussels to visit headquarters of the European Union, the European Commission, and NATO while networking for internship and job opportunities throughout the year. Professional and academic exchanges are available at Sciences Po in Paris as well as organizations in Brussels, Switzerland, and South Africa. About 90 percent of graduates are currently employed, many of them at the United Nations, the World Health Organization, various embassies, and in the private sector.

Some U.S.-based schools also offer opportunities to spend a semester or longer abroad. At **Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)**, the two-year, full-time Master of Arts is the cornerstone of the SAIS experience. About 50 percent of all entering students in the Master of Arts program spend a year at SAIS Europe and a year in Washington. The other 50 percent spend both years in Washington. The academic program is the same for both groups of students and consists of interdisciplinary course work in international relations, economics, and languages.

SAIS offers two additional two-year MA degrees: a research-oriented MA in International Affairs at its campus in Bologna, Italy, and an MA in International Studies at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center in China, which requires Mandarin language proficiency.

International affairs and policymaking come together in the **University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA)**. Based in Canada's capital, the school is a stone's throw from Parliament Hill, foreign embassies, and government departments. Its multidisciplinary curriculum unites theory with practice, supported by a wide range of internship opportunities in different countries.

The **University of Kent's Two Capitals Programme** offers a unique opportunity to study international affairs from two global capitals. Students spend the first year of their master's program at the

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university's Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) and the second year studying in either Washington, D.C., or Beijing.

BSIS offers a flexible program that allows students to pursue internship opportunities alongside their studies. Students may also take courses in political science, law, politics, history, and economics as part of the MA program in international economics.

5. Cutting-Edge Approaches

Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) offers a highly international, interdisciplinary perspective and a powerful blend of research and practice. "SIPA's policy research and training cut across issues that are homegrown, cross-border, and international in nature," says Merit Janow, the school's dean.

The three newest of SIPA's seven transnational, issue-based centers and institutes are the Center for Development Economics and Policy, the Center on Global Energy Policy, and the Center on Global Economic Governance. Students can also take advantage of Columbia University's regional centers and institutes and its network of global centers in East Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East.

With an eye toward global policy challenges in the years ahead, SIPA has recently added new courses on technology in economic and political development as well as workshops on coding,

entrepreneurship, and project design. The school has also hosted seminars on the use of technology to address public policy challenges such as conflict, instability, and repression.

"Having also served in the U.S. government and international organizations, I know there is an extraordinary connection between the research and curriculum at SIPA and what global leaders are addressing today," says Janow. "Our community of SIPA alumni spreads across 155 countries, with more than 18,000 active leaders in the private, public, and NGO sectors."

6. Life on Campus

Students choose both a career specialization and a regional focus in the two-year Master of Pacific International Affairs at **UC San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS)**. But there is an additional reason why Sonja Steinbrech, director of admissions, says the program reflects a mentality that is innovative and trailblazing in its approach to international relations: "Students and faculty at the school tend to be high-performing and unpretentious, with a work hard, play hard mentality," she says. "There is much camaraderie between students and professors—from running groups, to surfing sessions, to active mentorship in student groups like Export Access." Export Access helps local businesses in Southern California and Mexico bring their products and expertise to international markets.

<p>Brian Camblin '13 Program Officer, National Democratic Institute Washington, D.C.</p>		<h1>UC San Diego</h1> <h2>JOIN A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERSHIP</h2>
<p>Elisabeth Best '12 Senior Analyst for International Government Affairs, Qualcomm San Diego, CA</p>		
<p>Daniel Durazo '12 Foreign Service Officer, U.S. State Department Tegucigalpa, Honduras</p>		

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UC San Diego is a premier research institution and has become a top destination for federal research investment. There are growing opportunities for IR/PS to build bridges between international policy and the sciences, including projects with the university's engineering department and with Scripps Institute of Oceanography. IR/PS has been collaborating with Scripps on climate change research.

Statistics and writing are important skills for IR/PS students. "Research is big here, and we really value students getting those skills to apply them in the professional world," says Steinbrech.

APSIA

Many leading schools of international affairs are members of APSIA, the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs. APSIA was founded in the early 1980s to improve the field of international affairs by opening lines of communication between the schools, allowing them to share resources and exchange best practices.

7. Location, Location

A lot of policymaking takes place in the capital cities of Washington, Ottawa, and Brussels, but New York City's status as a global center for multilateral diplomacy and international business makes it another prime location for studying international affairs.

At **Fordham University's Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development (IPED)**, many students specialize in international banking and finance with an eye toward the city's jobs in banking or consulting. "Our curriculum, as well as our location in New York City, is ideal for anyone who wishes to be at the center of the world economy at the start of the new millennium," says Henry Schwalbenberg, director of IPED.

IPED students who specialize in development studies may do an internship with Catholic Relief Services and later become eligible for project management positions there or at other relief organizations. Careers in the public sector, however, are a top choice among IPED graduates who specialize in international economics or in global and environmental resource economics.

The New School's Julien J. Studley Graduate Program in International Affairs (GPIA), also in New York City, is distinctive for its critical and interdisciplinary perspective on important international policy questions. In The New School tradition, the approach is reflective, iconoclastic, and morally engaged. Students complete an MA or an MS in International Affairs in one of five concentrations: Cities and Social Justice, Conflict and Security, Development, Governance and Rights, or Media and Culture.

Critical thinking and practical social engagement are intertwined in GPIA's curriculum, its practicum in international affairs, and its international field program. Internships are available among the many New York organizations devoted to international issues.

Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations is within easy reach of New York from its suburban New Jersey campus. Graduate students can take classes in New York City in the school's United Nations Intensive Summer Study Program. Participants attend official sessions at UN Headquarters and meet distinguished practitioners working in the field of multilateral diplomacy.

Graduate students can also spend a semester studying in Washington, D.C., and take advantage of internship opportunities. This fall, the school will offer a course in diplomacy at the UN Foundation in Washington, D.C.

8. Flexibility

Do you yearn for a flexible program with the freedom to design your own path of study?

Small and intimate, yet broad and intellectually demanding, the Master's Program in Global Affairs at **Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs** attracts creative, intellectually curious students. In the first semester, students take three required core courses and an elective. Their remaining

In The New School tradition, the approach is reflective, iconoclastic, and morally engaged.

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David Brooks, senior fellow, Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, Yale University

courses in the two-year program are all electives. Students are also free to take courses at Yale's School of Management, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Law School, and School of Public Health. Some students pursue a joint degree with one of those schools.

"We work with you as you build an individual concentration," says Cristin Siebert, director

of student affairs. "We are looking for people who have a direction, but we don't necessarily expect you to stick with your statement of purpose," she notes. "We expect a lot of exploration."

With only 25 to 30 students in each entering class, students come with diverse backgrounds and interests and serve as a resource for one another. As in several other leading graduate programs in international affairs, close to half the students come from outside the United States.

9. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

"Our students are online and on Skype with each other every day," says Deborah Nutter, senior associate dean of **The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University**.

Nutter is not referring to the school's two-year Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD) or its Master of International Business (MIB) program, but rather to Fletcher's one-year Global Master of Arts Program (GMAP). Designed for mid- to senior-level international professionals, GMAP combines Internet-mediated study with two-week residencies.

The GMAP curriculum includes all aspects of international affairs that leaders in any discipline must master: international negotiation; finance; law; politics; transnational issues such as humanitarian security; and more.

"The program puts students in diverse teams. You come from your field, and you want to understand other fields," says Nutter.

"The program puts students in diverse teams. You come from your field, and you want to understand other fields."

— Deborah Nutter, senior associate dean of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University

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The Fletcher School's multidisciplinary approach to complex problem solving transcends the classroom and prepares graduates for leadership positions that span traditional boundaries. Students from 80 different countries choose from more than 170 courses in law, economics, finance, diplomatic history, politics, security and much more. Across myriad backgrounds, fields of interest, perspectives and cultures, they work collaboratively and study collectively.

As a result, Fletcher students emerge networked, engaged and equipped with the skills to build bridges toward a more secure and prosperous future.

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Rachel Kyte, GMAP 2002,
World Bank Group Vice President and
Special Envoy for Climate Change,
pictured at an ICRISAT lab for
transgenic crops



James Stavridis, MALD 1983, PhD 1984
(left), former Supreme Allied
Commander at NATO and current
Fletcher Dean, and Joseph Dunford,
MALD 1992 (right), head of International
Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan



Manjula Dissanayake, MALD 2012,
Founder, Educate Lanka micro-
scholarship fund; *Diplomatic Courier's*
Top 99 Under 33 Foreign Policy
Leader (2013)

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Wolfgang Ischinger, MA 1973,
Chairman, Munich Security Conference;
current OSCE negotiator on Ukraine

Cultivating Intercultural Awareness

The **SIT Graduate Institute** MA in Sustainable Development: International Policy and Management is a one-year program in Washington, D.C. It uses field-based experiential learning in an academic setting to develop skills for solving global problems. Courses are based on facilitated discussion, simulations, and other forms of experiential learning. Rather than doing field study abroad, students do fieldwork at a development organization such as the World Bank.

“The program emphasizes intercultural sensitivity and awareness,” says Preeti Shroff-Mehta, dean of SIT Graduate Institute’s Washington, D.C., center. “Students acquire the ability to adapt to different cultures to solve problems.”

SIT Graduate Institute is part of World Learning, an international NGO that focuses on education, cultural exchange, and development.

Another NGO with internationally oriented master’s degree programs is the **University of Bridgeport**—one of only 12 U.S. universities granted NGO status by the United Nations. Its **College of Public and International Affairs** offers MA programs in East Asian and Pacific Rim Studies, Global Development and Peace (including an online option), and Global Media and Communication Studies.

Many students come to the program because they are moving into leadership from a management or specialist position and need to broaden their horizons. Others may simply be in a job that calls for an understanding of complexities beyond their own area of specialization. And some students are seeking a career shift to a different sector or field.

When LinkedIn isn’t enough, students turn to GMAP’s powerful global network for connecting with professionals from different disciplines. GMAP students also value the chance to polish their skills in writing memos, giving presentations, and using new communications technologies.

10. Online Study Option

In his eight years as a U.S. Marine, John Gordon has completed two deployments to Afghanistan. Last December, while still on active duty, he also completed an online MA in Diplomacy at **Norwich University**, with a concentration in international conflict management.

In September, when his term of service with the Marines is set to end, Gordon will begin a new career as a U.S. Foreign Service officer.

“Norwich set me up for success in my goal,” says Gordon. “The MA program was very writing-intensive. That especially helped me with the 30-minute essay portion of the Foreign Service Exam.”

Apart from a June 2013 residency conference on the Norwich University campus in Northfield, Vt., Gordon’s studies took place entirely online.

“It took a lot of self-discipline,” says Gordon. “If you are a full-time working professional, it really tests your time management skills.” He figures he spent at least 30 hours per week on his studies: about four hours most weeknights, plus at least six hours per day on the weekends.

Gordon is set to enter the Political Affairs track of the U.S. Foreign Service. He would like his first assignment to be in a so-called “hardship post”—a location where living conditions are tough because of climate, crime, lack of health care, or other factors. “I want to be in a place where I can make a difference,” he says. ■



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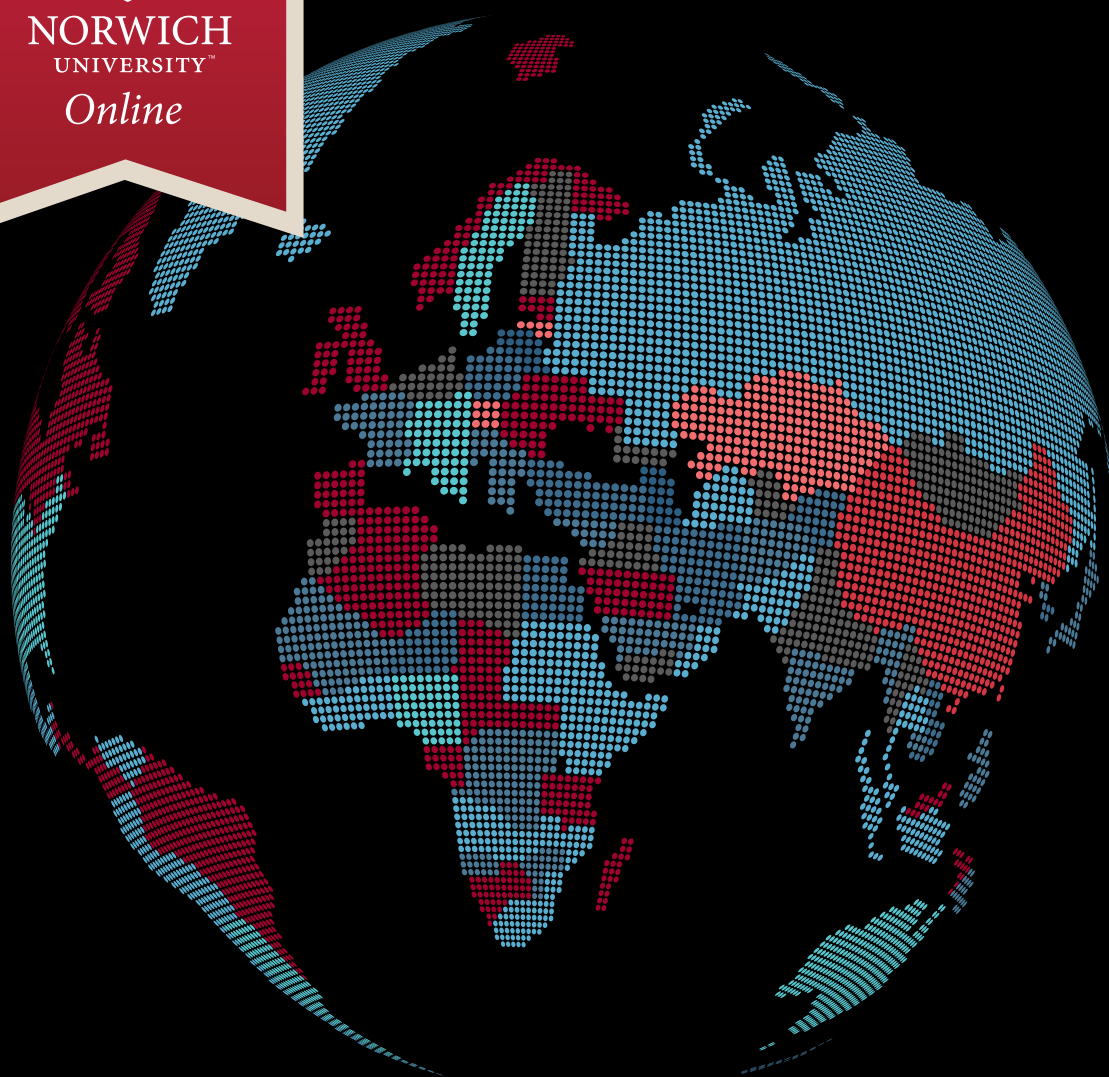
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