China and Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) Program

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What makes this an internationalized curriculum? Please describe the experience abroad and how you internationalized the curriculum at home.

The China and Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) program is premised on an international curriculum; it is weaved into the DNA of the program. Not only is the subject matter – China – an international one for our students who do not originate from China, but the second half of the program – Asia-Pacific – internationalizes the experiences for those students who were born and raised in the Mainland. The language component and the off-campus semester in China, which are required for CAPS majors, are by their definition, international. Moreover, the substantive courses that the students take, whether in Ithaca, Washington DC, or in Beijing, are also by their very nature, international in outlook and scope.

How has the international experience been integrated into the curriculum?

The international experience has been an integral part of CAPS curriculum since the establishment of the program. The semester in Beijing is required for CAPS majors, and highly recommended for CAPS minors. It is carefully interwoven with the CAPS curriculum in every aspect:

a) Two out of the five required CAPS courses (excluding gateways) are offered only in the Beijing semester in order for the students to learn about China’s changing politics, economy and society, as well as Chinese perspectives on international and global affairs. CAPS students may also take any single course offered in the School of International Studies at Peking University to fulfill CAPS elective requirements.

b) The Beijing semester serves as an indispensable component in students’ continuous language training. It provides multiple levels of Chinese language courses to CAPS majors and minors based on their previous language proficiency. Specific efforts have been made to ensure the language courses offered in Beijing be consistent and match up with courses offered in Ithaca.

c) The Beijing semester also entails the completion of at least one non-paid, non-credit externship(s), either in Beijing or in any other city of the Greater China area, which is also a mandatory part of the CAPS curriculum.
What are the intended student learning outcomes of the internationalized curriculum related to knowledge generation, changed attitudes, and developed skills, and how do you assess them?

The intended student learning outcomes of the internationalized curriculum are threefold:

a) The first outcome is the ability to recognize and analyze challenges and complexities in U.S.-China relations with knowledge gained from CAPS courses, internships, and overseas experience. We assess this outcome through performance in coursework, internship feedback from employers and from the students, and especially through the wrap-up seminar (CAPS 4030) offered in Ithaca during the last spring semester.

b) The second outcome is the student’s ability to discern and appreciate perspectives different from their own, as well as their ability to critically discuss how cultural contexts may shape individual world views. We assess this outcome through pre-departure, overseas and post-trip workshops and consultation sessions.

c) The third outcome is establishing the skill set to communicate, network and collaborate in a different language or cultural setting (in this case, China). We encourage – indeed sometimes force – our students to take part into intercultural communications. While the language skills are constantly assessed through each of the Chinese language courses, the ability to effectively communicate and work with people from a Chinese cultural background will be assessed primarily through students’ internship and fieldwork in China.