**International Security Studies (ISS) Program Assessment**

**International Security Studies Program Description:**

The MAISS program is designed to give established and aspiring international security professionals the necessary edge in a chaotic world. It is ideal for political/economic specialists, threat specialists, and foreign area specialists. In addition to coursework, the program will offer non-classroom professional activities to promote networking and career advancement.

**Students who obtain the International Security degree should be able to:**

* Explain the development of the international security; describe the major trends and use theories as an instrument to analyze and critique the major problems or issues within the international arena.
* Discuss application of international law and the role force to comprehending state behavior; understand how force leads to regional and international stability, and how international organizations (i.e., the United Nations) remains an essential instrument in ending aggression;
* Describe the role of intelligence and how it used in analyzing threats to U.S. security and international security; explain how intelligence assessment is a critical component of policy making;
* Explain the motivations and causes of terrorism; understand the agendas and strategies of the major terrorist groups; understand the major counterterrorist policies of the United States and its allies and how those strategies are employed to defeat threats to U.S. and international security;

**Competencies**

* Survey, assess, and analyze groups that choose violence to effect social or political change and the dynamics that sustain or contain them;
* Analyze and evaluate counterterrorism strategies with specific attention to the post 9/11 environment;
* Survey the causes of the rise in international terrorism and evaluate its threat on United States national security. Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by the US and its coalition partners;
* Examine and analyze the strategic use of intelligence as a means of executing and enforcing US counterintelligence, defense, and foreign policies;
* Examine, analyze, and evaluate the effectiveness of intelligence assessment of the capabilities, motives, and objectives of perceived threats to inform the development and implementation of US national strategy;
* Analyze and evaluate the roles of intelligence and law enforcement in assessing threat potential, disrupting networks, interdicting financial and personnel transactions and the overall effectiveness in combating global terror networks;
* Design and implement qualitative and quantitative research initiatives that inform and impact evidence based conclusions and decision making; and
* Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize qualitative or quantitative research data to inform and impact evidence based conclusions and decision making in an original research project (Basic, Applied, or Evaluation).

**Program Requirements:** Students seeking a Masters degree in International Security Studies will have to complete a total of **36 credits.** Of those credits students will have to complete 9 core credits (ISS 500 Security in Global Context, ISS 510 Role of Force in International Relations, and ISS 520 Soft Power and International Security). Second, students are required to complete 6 elective courses (or 18 hrs); all students are required to complete INT 601 (3 credits), and finally, all students are required to complete ISS 690 (Capstone or Thesis class; 6 credits) as the final program requirement.

**Program Evaluation:** In an examination of the ISS program, for the most part many of the aforementioned competencies were often never met. There were a host of reasons associated with this failure: (1) instructors relied almost exclusively on unclassified government documents, summaries or reports, (2) there were insufficient instructors that were experts in the “course area,” which translated into the failure to impart rudimentary theories or trends to students; (3) this issue becomes more problematic when it is understood that students rarely received textbooks or they were not introduced to the seminal works that would have advanced student knowledge and critical thinking skills; (4) the program curriculum lacked diversity, was woefully antiquated, and there were no preexisting courses that focused on the most significant issues in international security; (5) the research course failed to impart the basic research skills (particularly in the area of qualitative methodologies that infused comprehension of case study analysis, levels of analysis, to name a few). This translated into students that were underprepared to use much of the material imparted to them in the Capstone/Thesis course; (6) In an examination of the Capstone/Thesis, course few students met the “listed competencies.” Worse, in “examining previous papers” and participating in the some of the Thesis Presentations, the writing, the failure to include appropriate methodology (for example, many of the papers lacked a “theoretical framework”), there was no rubric or guidelines for the course, and students all too often failed to employ APA style both in the use of citations within the text and the Bibliographical did not conform to the style manual used in this course; additionally, previous students complained about the grading standards (in fact there were no preexisting grading standards) and students complained about feedback and the absence of classroom instruction form the faculty member.