

# THE SENIOR IAS 4013 CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

## WHAT IS A CAPSTONE?

Capstone courses are intended to serve as the culminating experience for IAS undergraduates. In most cases, students will enroll in capstone courses during their senior year, after having completed substantial undergraduate coursework at the upper-division level. The content of capstone courses will be thematic (e.g. Global Inequality, Mega Cities, Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, etc.). The themes of the capstone courses will vary from semester to semester, and from instructor to instructor. Capstone courses will not be regionally focused but will instead be global and comparative in nature. Students will have broad flexibility in choosing a topic for their individual projects. While capstone courses will focus on global and comparative themes, individual student projects may have a specific regional or area focus. However, the topic for these individual projects should fit within the thematic parameters of the capstone in which the student is enrolled. Instructors have considerable flexibility in designing the reading, research, and writing requirements for the capstone courses.

While capstones will meet regularly, each capstone may incorporate individual student meetings with the course instructor. These meetings may, at the discretion of the instructor, replace regular class sessions – but only up to a maximum of 300 minutes of scheduled class time (i.e., no more than four 75-minute classes). There is also flexibility with respect to teaching methods in the capstones. However, the pedagogical goal of the capstone course should be to provide a collaborative learning environment (maximum enrollment of 20) where students will complete a substantial semester-length research and writing project, and in which students have the opportunity to apply the multidisciplinary skills they've acquired in the IAS major to important global themes.

## CLASS SIZE:

Given that the nature of the capstone is a seminar, the primary mode of instruction will likely be discussion. There will be extensive reflection and writing as well as student presentations throughout the semester. To facilitate this type of learning experience, class sizes will be capped at 20 students.

## ENROLLMENT:

As with all courses offered on campus, some classes will fill faster than others. The same goes with capstones. Enrollment is on first come first served basis. Sections will stay capped at 20 students, and if a section is full, students will be asked to enroll in another open section.

## SPRING 2025 IAS 4013 CAPSTONE SECTIONS:

Sec. 001 ***Elections Around the World***, TR 10:30-11:45am, Dr. Natalie Letsa

Nearly every country in the world today holds elections of some sort, yet no two elections are exactly alike. Depending on the rules of the game, the environment in which they are held, and the ways in which both candidates and voters choose to participate, the meaning and importance of elections varies drastically both within and across countries. By studying the differences between elections, the goal of the course is to: 1) better understand how elections have different meanings in different contexts, 2) articulate the relationship between democracy, governance, and elections, and 3) interrogate the question of why and if elections matter – and for whom.

Sec. 002 ***Nations & Nationalism***, TR 3:00-4:15pm, Dr. Afhsin Marashi

Nations, nationalism, nation-states, nation-building, and ethno-national conflict are all phenomena that are increasingly at the center of contemporary international affairs. This capstone course will investigate the nature of these interrelated, yet distinct, concepts from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students will do close readings from the fields of history, sociology, anthropology, political science, and related fields in order to gain a broad understanding of the scholarly literature in the field of “comparative nationalism studies.” Students will also complete an individual research project on a specific case-study of nations and nationalism. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the social science literature in the field of nationalism studies, while also looking for ways of applying these theoretical insights to practical real-world contexts.