Sacred Heart University

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In the ongoing effort to further internationalize its campus and its educational offerings, this fall Sacred Heart University is launching a new undergraduate major in global studies.

“The global studies major is designed to equip students with global competencies through a broad-based and multidisciplinary understanding of transnational processes that prepare them for global engagement,” says Lesley DeNardis, associate professor and director of the new global studies program. “Young adults today need to prepare themselves for a role as global citizens who are poised to contribute to the human community, one which now transcends national borders and boundaries. Students who understand the diverse historical, political, cultural, social, religious and economic influences present in different societies will be prepared to participate as global citizens as they confront and contribute to resolving global challenges.”

In addition to other graduation requirements, the new bachelor’s degree will require a minimum of 39 credits in program courses such as “World Geography,” “Human Cultural Diversity,” “Introduction to International Relations” and “International Political Economy.”

Students will complete a common core of seven courses and six elective courses to be chosen from among five areas: Asian Area Studies, European Area Studies, International Systems, Latin American Area Studies or Middle Eastern Studies and African Studies. Students must equally distribute the six elective courses among two concentrations, half of which must be upper division courses. Additionally, students are required to take six credits of a foreign language and complete one semester studying abroad.

“One of the strongest selling points for a global studies major is its versatility in terms of career paths,” DeNardis says. “Students will be prepared in the liberal arts tradition with its emphasis on cultivating critical thinking and fostering the analytical, oral and written communication skills that are highly valued by employers.” DeNardis points to several careers that would benefit from an education in global studies, including State Department analyst, cross-cultural trainer, Peace Corps officer and jobs in international trade and business.

DeNardis says an additional strength of the program is its faculty. “The program draws from the expertise of current faculty at SHU who are specialists in each of the foundational and area concentrations,” she notes.

The global studies program was approved by the State of Connecticut in May 2014 and is launches in August with an inaugural cohort of about 10 students.