

Major Proposal in Social Development

Kate Moran

Class of 2012

Social Development as a field has been described by Garry Jacobs and Harlan Cleveland as the process of organizing human energies and activities at higher levels to achieve greater results. Using their definition as a starting point, my goal is to create a major that will allow me to better understand how social structures are formed and maintained, and how we, as humans, organize ourselves based on the structures already existing in our societies. I will do so by taking courses from Psychology, Religion, Sociology and Politics.

In a way, each of the disciplines provides an important lens through which we can view human relations from the interpersonal level up through the international. Psychology grants insight into the mental processes that impact decision-making and action. It allows us to better understand some of the factors that impact why people do the things that they do; how personality and cognition affect individual choices and, thus, social interaction. Religion provides a framework for reflection on what it is to be human, and structures belief systems which impact our relationships within the greater society. Sociology helps us to better understand the range of social relationships in complex societies. Students will study social movements and structures, leading to a better understanding of how community affects individual action so profoundly. Politics, within this major, studies the interaction of those other three disciplines; it serves as a foundation for institutions that determine how wealth and power are distributed within a society, thus shaping societal norms and priorities. Because of this, politics acts as a secular vehicle for cross-cultural communication, and allows for the global implementation of individual ideas. It provides the mechanism with which humans can enact social change.

By exploring psychology, religion, sociology and politics, students in this field will gain a broader base of knowledge for understanding the levels of human organization. Students will study American cultural ideals and how they are implemented in the global arena, as well as the political and social norms of other countries that impact global relations. For this reason, a study abroad experience is required.

Political courses are divided between those which focus on American politics, and those with a broader international focus. Courses within the department that I have taken include *History of the International System* and *Issues in Politics: Global HIV/AIDS*, both of which provide a perspective on international political maneuvering, as well as *Gender and Sexuality in American Politics* and *US Foreign Policy* which give background on American political affairs. By understanding both sides of the coin, domestic and foreign affairs, students can better understand how individuals shape global policy. Additionally, classes like *Conflict Management and Resolution* provide a bridge between the two disciplines by helping students understand how cultural differences impact political dialogue.

Courses in the anthropology/sociology and religion departments are meant to prepare students to work in an increasingly globalized world. Sociology classes like *Peace and War* help students understand how social systems shape peacekeeping efforts and the methods and means of making war. Religion classes like *Contemporary Currents in American Religion* and *Inter-Religious Dialogue* help students to understand how religious beliefs can mold the framework for peacekeeping efforts.

Psychology courses will help students to understand why individuals implement governmental politics and social practices in their own lives. Studying *Cross-Cultural Psychology* and *Psychology of Law*, for

example, will allow students to develop their understanding of why individual thought-processes become more steadily macro when applied in politics and society.

By studying Social Development, I hope to gain a better appreciation for human interaction by understanding the factors that influence it, and the social factors that come into play in political dealings. Since my future career will doubtlessly include working with other people, potentially from foreign backgrounds, having a better appreciation for how human interaction is impacted by culture and religion will be critical. The required study-abroad experience is meant to facilitate application of the classroom material by encouraging students to interact with individuals from other backgrounds. Students will be strongly encouraged to develop a solid background in a modern foreign language as well.

Proposer's Signature: _____

Kate Moran

Committee Member's Signature: _____

DJH

Committee Member's Signature: _____

Alice

Committee Member's Signature: _____

Gene Harris

12 Courses distributed as follows

- 2 Politics Courses
 1. Poli 281 U.S. Foreign Policy
 2. Poli 380 Gender, Sexuality and American Politics

- 1 Psychology Course
 1. Psyc 230 Social Psychology

- 2 Religion Courses
 1. Reli 232 Concepts of God
Or
Reli 317 Religion & Politics
Or
Reli 330 Religion, Gender and Sexuality
Or
Reli 393 Inter-Religious Dialogue
 2. Reli 243 Contemporary Currents in American Religion

- 2 Sociology/Anthropology Courses
 1. Soci 320 Peace and War
 2. Soci 360 Social Change/Social Movements

- 2 Elective Courses
 1. Poli 353 Conflict Management and Resolution
 2. A Theory course
 - Poli 300 Feminist Political Thought
 - Anth 365 Anthropological Theory

- Research Element (2 courses)
 1. Poli 400 Methods in Political Analysis
 2. Poli 497 Senior Research Seminar

- Study Abroad Experience ("1" course):
Hendrix-in-London (Fall '10)

The Senior Capstone will be fulfilled with the completion of Poli 497 Senior Research Seminar. The grade earned in that course will serve as the student's Capstone grade.