

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 have 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.

FALL 2026 IAS 4013 CAPSTONE SECTIONS:

Sec. 001 ***“Human Rights and Migration”***, TR 12:00-1:15pm, Dr. Michelle Morais

This capstone course provides a support framework for research on questions directly related to human rights and migration. Unlike the upper-level classes on the same topic, which are geared towards professional human rights work, the capstone class is rather focused on academic research. From the beginning, students will be introduced to the tenants of scholarly research while getting acquainted with the main scholarly debates on international human rights law, international human rights institutions, grassroots advocacy, and human rights policy. The class structure follows the research design process and gives students multiple opportunities to present their research ideas, project, and final paper.