

International and Global

Salt Lake Community College | General Education

International and Global (IG) at SLCC Includes:

- World Religions
- International Relations
- Culture and Human Experience
- Human Geography
- World History
- World Literature
- Comparative Politics
- World Music

Why an IG Requirement?

Organizations such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Association of International Educators have long called for more globally attuned general education programs, and businesses are interested in hiring and promoting people who understand the world beyond America's borders. SLCC is dedicated to ensuring that its students can navigate an increasingly interdependent world.



Detail from Norman Rockwell's *Golden Rule in the United Nations Building*. Photo by David Hubert.

International and Global Inquiry

International and Global (IG) courses focus on the world beyond the United States. This general education designation uses the words *international* and *global* to describe what are distinct but often interrelated objects of study.

International courses provide a broad base of knowledge about two or more countries in a comparative and/or interpretive context, and may focus on their interactions, exchanges, relations, perspectives, cultures, communications, historical developments, political and/or economic systems, geography, or educational processes. The unit of analysis in international courses is typically the **nation-state**, which is a term that refers to a people who share a common national identity and have a politically sovereign system to govern themselves and to represent them on the international stage. These courses are particularly interested in how nation-states differ from one another in their political systems, policies, historical development, and so forth. Sometimes these courses use the United States as a reference point, but not necessarily.

What Do You Think?

1. Does a course have to neatly fit into the global-international framework? Can you think of courses that might transcend that dichotomy? Explain.
2. Can you think of examples where having an awareness of the world beyond the United States would help you in your career or as a citizen?
3. The IG designation groups courses by their subject matter rather than their disciplinary perspective. How does that fact shape what course you want to use to satisfy the IG requirement in general education?
4. Can people draw different conclusions from the same set of data or observations? Why or why not? Can you provide an example of data or observations that either can or cannot be subject to multiple interpretations?
5. Imagine that you take a trip to a foreign country with a dramatically different culture than yours. How might taking an IG course help you better understand its people and society?

Of course, nation-states are an ideal-type concept, and not all countries fit the definition. Additionally, nation-states are relatively recent human developments. Courses that focus on particular political units like principalities, kingdoms, and even empires would fall under the “international” label. Thus, a comparative politics course would be the prototypical international course, but a course on world history would also fit more loosely into that category.

Global courses, on the other hand, focus on the interconnected and interdependent issues that transcend all national borders and function worldwide, such as natural and environmental matters, social issues, culturally-created phenomena, and technology. Courses in world music, religion, or literature would clearly fit into this category.

International and global courses broaden students’ understanding of the world and allow them to apply disciplinary knowledge to contexts outside of the United States. Each course differs not only in its subject matter, but also in the **comparative or interpretive framework** it employs. For instance, imagine how looking at a particular subject changes when one moves from a political to a literary lens. IG courses also explore the **complexities of identity**, and help students understand that identity is deeply rooted in culture, language, religion, race/ethnicity, geography, and power. As you study about the broader world, you will have opportunities to use your analytical skills to understand global **interdependence**, which simply means the mutual dependence of people and systems.



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