

# Program Assessment Plan

## American University

### Academic Program: SIS: International Peace and Conflict Resolution - MA

**Academic Program: SIS: International Peace and Conflict Resolution - MA**

**Program Mission:** IPCR focuses on the causes of war and organized violence, the conditions of peace, and the processes of conflict analysis and resolution. IPCR is founded on the belief that violence is neither necessary or inevitable, and that change toward social justice and sustainable peace can best be approached from a collaborative and humanistic perspective that engages people in constructive conflict resolution.

**Contact Person for** Ronald Fisher

**Assessment:**

**Unit Website Address:** www.american.edu/sis/ipcr

**Unit's Primary Department:** Intl Peace/Conflic Res.

**COLA last discussed report** 03/11/2011

**with unit on:**

**COLA Reader -1:** Betsy Cohn

**COLA Reader -2:** Chana Barron

**Learning Outcome: Concepts and Methods**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts and methods in peace and conflict resolution.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011

**Start Date:** 11/12/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
Direct: Successful completion of term papers, examinations and conceptual presentations as required in SIS-607, 609, 606, 610 (IPCR core courses). Specific criteria need to be developed here. <b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment	100% of graduates should demonstrate adequate or better understanding and knowledge. This is demonstrated by successful completion of the core courses and by passing the comprehensive exam, which is a section in the SRP or thesis, and is still required for current students who are completing the old curriculum. The new curriculum, which is available to current students entering their second year and which will be required of all incoming students from Fall 2012 onwards, does not require a Comprehensive Exam.	Data is collected at the end of each semester. Data will be reviewed by IPCR core faculty at subsequent meetings.	Yes
Indirect Measure: Feedback from students at IPCR Annual Retreats and Town Hall Meetings, specifically on the effectiveness of the core courses in imparting the basics of the field. <b>Measure Type:</b> Other	General satisfaction with the coverage of PCR concepts and methods in the core courses was expressed at the 2011 IPCR Annual Retreat on April 15. At the 2012 IPCR Annual Retreat on April 13, 2012, continuing concern was expressed over the redundancy of some topics in the core courses, and a working group of faculty, students and staff identified the specific redundancies and recommended dropping SIS 610, Theories of Violence and War, as a required core course. This information was reviewed at an IPCR Core	Data is collected annually. Data will be reviewed by IPCR core faculty at subsequent meetings.	Yes

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
	Faculty Meeting on May 8, 2012, and the decision was made to delete SIS 610 as a required core course, and to move any coverage of essential, major concepts and methods to the other three core courses (SIS 607, 609 and 606). Subsequently, the Program Director sent a memo on July 19, 2012 to all instructors of the core courses identifying the topics to be moved from 610 to each of the other three core courses.		

### Related Courses

- SIS-606 - Culture and Peace and Conflict Resolution
- SIS-607 - Peace Paradigms
- SIS-609 - Conflict Analysis and Resolution: Theory and Practice
- SIS-610 - Theory of Conflict, Violence and War

### Related Action Steps

\* Supporting Assessment: Indirect Measure: Feedback from students at Annual Retreat.

**Description:** The information from the Annual Retreat was reviewed at an IPCR Core Faculty Meeting on May 8, 2012, and the decision was made to delete SIS 610 as a required core course, and to move any coverage of essential, major concepts and methods to the other three core courses (SIS 607, 609 and 606). Subsequently, the Program Director sent a memo on July 19, 2012 to all instructors of the core courses identifying the topics to be moved from 610 to each of the other three core courses.

### Learning Outcome: Specialized Knowledge

Students will acquire knowledge in an area of concentration (stream) within their degree program.

**Outcome Year:** 2011-2012

**Start Date:** 11/12/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
Students are now required to complete the IPCR CAP (Candidate Academic Plan) form which lays out the courses and rationale for their area of concentration. The development of Learning Outcomes for each area of concentration will enable the development of measures to assess this Outcome. Learning Outcomes for each of the six areas of concentration were developed by faculty in those areas during the 2010-2011 academic year, and were discussed at the IPCR Annual Retreat in April and subsequently finalized for usage. <b>Measure Type:</b> Other	100% of graduates are required to declare and complete an area of concentration (related field, area of concentration, or unique concentration) as part of their degree program.	CAP forms are completed by first year students during the Spring or Summer semester with the advice of the IPCR Graduate Adviser and a Faculty Member in their area of concentration if necessary.	Yes

### Learning Outcome: Research Projects

Students will develop and execute research projects integrating theory and analysis.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011

**Start Date:** 11/12/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>Direct measure: Assessment of the quality of Substantial Research Papers and Theses: Faculty supervisors will rate SRPs and Theses on a 5-point scale on the quality of integrating theory and data analysis from outstanding (5) to satisfactory (1). Starting with the 2011-2012 academic year, this rating scale has been added to the Comprehensive Exam Form to be filled out at the completion of the student's Substantial Research Paper or Thesis, so that faculty supervisors can automatically record their rating which will then be compiled with all the ratings at the end of the academic year for reporting purposes.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment</p>	<p>100% of graduates will distribute on the 5-point scale with 75% in the very good to outstanding categories.</p> <p>5. Outstanding 4. Excellent 3. Very Good 2. Good 1. Satisfactory</p>	<p>Data is collected at the end of each semester and will be reviewed by IPCR core faculty at subsequent meetings.</p>	Yes
<p>Indirect measure: Feedback from students at IPCR Annual Retreat and Town Hall Meeting, specifically on the research experience.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>	<p>General satisfaction with the research experience by students and faculty at the IPCR Annual Retreat. At this past April's retreat, discussion focused on confirming several research competencies that were developed as sub outcomes to the Research Projects Learning Outcome.</p>	<p>Data is collected annually and will be reviewed by IPCR core faculty at subsequent meetings.</p>	Yes

### Learning Outcome: Communication Skills

Students will demonstrate their writing and speaking skills so they can clearly and effectively convey their knowledge.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011

**Start Date:** 11/12/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>The IPCR Program intends to develop a standardized evaluation mechanism to assess student presentations in the core courses, both for individuals and team presentations. Results from the evaluations will then be shared and discussed at faculty meetings with a view to improving student presentations. At the 2012 Annual Retreat, a working group of faculty and students discussed how to improve both student class presentations and the guidelines and feedback that faculty provide following presentations. The group reviewed a number of feedback templates and generated some proposed guidelines for presentations. Subsequently, the Program Director called on faculty to provide further examples of guidelines and feedback templates for consideration. Based on this information, a standard set of guidelines and feedback templates will be developed for both individual and team presentations.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Presentation</p>	<p>Students in core courses should demonstrate the ability to make verbal, media-assisted presentations of course material or case material in a manner that follows the guidelines and results in affirmative and useful feedback on the template.</p>		Yes

### Learning Outcome: Foreign Language

Students will demonstrate the capacity to speak, write and read a foreign language.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011

**Start Date:** 11/12/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
The IPCR Program is not responsible for assessing this Learning Outcome.			Yes

**Learning Outcome: Economics Theory**

Students will be able to apply concepts and theories from international economics to issues of peace and mass violence.

**Outcome Year:** 2010-2011

**Start Date:** 11/12/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
This outcome is currently assessed by the completion of SIS-696, Economics of Violence and Peace or related courses in Economics. There is a need to develop more specific learning outcome. <b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment	No measure identified.	No target identified.	Yes