

# INTRODUCTION AND GETTING STARTED

This is where you start to tell the story of your interests, passions, and aspirations. This story—one that is continuously changing and evolving—is the key to success once you complete your degree. This guide will help you think about how you fill in the details of the emerging story of who you are and where you are headed. This guide is designed to help you navigate the next few years of your college experience and provide a path for the life and world beyond.

## Chapter Objectives

- Be introduced to the field of global politics.
- Begin the process of preparing for postgraduate outcomes in the field of global politics.

You chose this course in international relations or comparative politics or international studies, what I refer to as global politics, for any number of reasons.

Maybe you're interested in how wars begin or end. Perhaps you've been moved by a refugee crisis or how nations respond—or don't respond—to natural disasters. You might have traveled abroad and wondered about how other systems work and how different cultures impact governments. Or you notice every year how all the leaders of the world gather at the United Nations, and you've wondered what happens there once they all leave.

It could be that you enter this course with plenty of questions: How do international organizations work? How does any nation develop a successful foreign policy? How can nongovernmental agencies impact global poverty?

These are just a few questions or concerns that might have prompted you to take an introductory course in global politics. For some of you, these issues and your interests will grow and you'll major in the field. For many others, you'll major in something else because of other interests, but you find this course or this area to be fascinating. Perhaps you'll minor or take a few more classes as electives.

Regardless of what you choose, there's another question you might consider: What am I going to do with my interest in global politics? This book will help you answer this question and will help match your interest in global politics with postgraduate outcomes.

So, what does the future hold for a student in global politics?

The answer is, quite a lot! There are more opportunities than you might even be aware of right now. How can you make a career out of a degree in global politics?

The answers are here. There are many rewarding, and varied, career options and postgraduate opportunities that await you at the completion of your degree. This book will guide you through the remainder of your undergraduate work and offer tips for navigating your life and the world beyond.

Your success beyond your undergraduate years begins with you and the story about yourself you will tell. Do not get bogged down with the question, "What am I going to be?" Rather, spend some time following the advice of Google's Education Evangelist, Jaime Casap, and ask the question, "What problem do I want to solve?"

When you redirect yourself away from a narrow focus ("I'm going to be a lawyer") to a broader focus on a problem or set of problems ("I want to end human trafficking"), then you open up a broader range of possibilities for the outcomes you'll encounter when you're done with college. It is also reasonable to believe that you will become a lawyer! But a broader focus on your studies will make you better prepared for your future career path even if you come full circle.

Focusing on a problem or set of problems you wish to solve also makes sense given the job market you will enter when college is over. Today's job market is continually churning with rapid advances in technology changing the basic contours of our economy. Somewhere in your family history is a story of a person who worked for one company or one entity his entire life and retired, perhaps with a pension.

That world no longer exists. Your world will be one of many jobs and multiple career paths. This guide exists, in part, to help you navigate this environment. One key to successfully doing so starts with this course in global politics.

## WHAT IS GLOBAL POLITICS?

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*Global politics* is a broad term, meant here to encompass international relations (the study of the relationships between nation-states), comparative politics (the study of the comparison between nation-states and systems), and international studies (the study of all the phenomena—economic, cultural, political—of the global system). These studies are related, and your college or university might offer specific courses in one or all of these fields. What distinguishes students pursuing a major or minor in global politics from other students is an interest in life beyond their domestic borders. And if you recognize this interest in yourself, then well done! You've accomplished the primary task in this book's objective to get you to tell your story: understanding your interests and passions.

## TELLING YOUR STORY

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“The whole story is about you. You are the main character.” —don Miguel Ruiz

The first step to a successful outcome is knowing who you are and what you’re interested in studying. If you’ve chosen this field because you’re interested in it, then you’ve started telling the story you will tell employers, graduate schools, and service providers.

Take a moment to jot down your areas of interest. Don’t hold back! Enjoy photography? Play video games? Write them all down.

So, you’ve established that you have an interest in global politics. Let’s demonstrate how this can be used from the very beginning with the most basic element in launching a career: the résumé. Although the job market has changed dramatically and will continue to do so during your time in college, there is one constant in the process of getting a job, and that’s a well-developed résumé. Consider that workers from Generation X (born between 1965 and 1984) changed jobs about twice during their first ten years out of college. Millennials (born between 1984 and 2004) changed jobs four times or more during the same time frame. Job and career options today include many that did not exist just a decade ago, such as social media managers, sustainability coordinators, and app developers.

The job market will continue to churn during your time in college. This guide will help you prepare for that.

Remarkably, many undergraduates wait until they need to apply for something important before they think about putting together a résumé. You should consider your résumé to be a work in progress and, as such, let’s get to work!

## DEVELOPING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

It begins with the easy stuff: name, address, education, and interests. We’ll revisit the résumé in the succeeding chapters and fill it in as we go:

Jasmine Q. Global  
20 International Way  
Universal City, NY 02548  
Phone number  
E-mail

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### Education

BA in *(fill in the name of your actual major)*, expected 2022

GPA: 3.2 (overall) 3.6 (major) *(you should be able to get these averages from your school's degree audit or your academic advisor)*

**Objective:** to begin my career in international affairs by *(write down the problem you want to solve, or write down more than one!)*

Okay, we've established your interest, and you've given some thought to the problems you want to solve. Know that it is okay at this point for your interests to be broad. In fact, think broadly. Perhaps you want to solve global poverty, solve the crisis in the Middle East, end human trafficking, provide clean water to those without it, or protect migrants from mistreatment. These are all expansive and admirable goals, and the people currently invested in trying to solve these problems need people like you who are thinking along these lines.

As you move through your curriculum, co-curriculum, internship, travel, and the first steps in your postgraduate life, you will learn how to tailor your broad interests (which you should never lose!) into actual career objectives.

### The BA in Global Politics

Graduates with this degree have opportunities across many fields: law, education, nonprofit and corporate work, service, and government. Consider the following list of individuals presented in "Answering Your Questions" who studied global politics and note the range of career outcomes.

## ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

What will you do with a BA in global politics? The answer is, quite a bit! Consider some of the following alums, who were, at one point, exactly where you are today.

- Sandra Boisvert, BA in international studies, director of campaigns and government relations at Public Response, a digital agency that serves leading nonprofits and unions in the fields of online engagement and government relations
- Sarah Cook, BA in international relations, writer and senior research analyst for East Asia at Freedom House, a nongovernmental research and advocacy organization devoted to democracy and human rights

- Alejandra Garduño, BA in international relations, program officer for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Kellogg Foundation
- Jennifer Griffin, BA in comparative politics, journalist and national security correspondent for Fox News
- Ban Ki-moon, BA in international relations, former secretary-general of the United Nations
- Amy Pascal, BA in international relations, businesswoman and Hollywood producer, former chairperson of the Motion Pictures Group of Sony Pictures Entertainment
- Frank Savage, BA in international relations, investment banker and chief executive officer of Savage Holdings LLC, a global financial services company

### Career Outcomes in Global Politics

There are many more outcomes for students in global politics. Remember that your future will be highly mobile. “Job hopping”—moving from one job to another in a relatively short time frame, say moving on or moving up every two years—is increasingly common among younger workers. Not only will you move around, but you expect to move around. Sometimes this movement will be within a defined career path, say marketing.

For example, a young worker interested in social media might begin her career as an intern for a local nonprofit organization that wants to strengthen its social media presence. This could lead to an entry-level position as a communications coordinator, which might lead to a copywriter position, then an editorial position, and then a social media strategist position for a large multinational corporation.

But it is also just as plausible that this young person interested in social media could find her way into multimedia design or sales or become a technical writer who becomes an operations analyst. That person might start in the corporate world but end up doing social media outreach for a nongovernmental organization focused on migration.

Certainly, there are traditional and excellent outcomes for students in global politics—diplomacy, law, advocacy, research and writing—and your choice of major will make these paths more likely.

Beyond these examples, it is important to remember that some of the jobs and opportunities that you might pursue in answer to your question (What problem do I want to solve?) may not even exist today or are part of a field that is rather small but growing. Data analytics, for example, continues to grow as an employment field with a lot of opportunities. And there are other paths that might seem far-fetched to you today as a student of global politics—careers in management, data analysis, IT networking, marketing, or sales. But these are also genuine possibilities for the student of global politics.

## CONCLUSION

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The next few chapters will help you navigate your curriculum and co-curriculum with an eye on translating your experiences into successful outcomes when you're finished with college.

It goes without saying that the success of this advice is predicated on you successfully pursuing your coursework. Naturally, if you've chosen global politics as your major or minor because that is where your interests lie, you are more likely to demonstrate strength and success in those courses. This book will also help you translate your interests, and the skills you are developing in your classes, into language that employers want to see on résumés and in cover letters. It will also introduce you to a few alumni in the field who are successfully navigating life after college. Finally, the book will give you a series of action items to pursue as you think about your agenda over the next few years.

### ACTION ITEM

#### Social Media

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Over 88% of millennials use one or more social media platforms. There are many reasons why, but consistently the most important one is to find out what your friends are talking about.

Social media are a powerful and persistent part of your life. But as you move toward your first career or competitive postgraduate outcome, it is important to remember that social media can provide you with an expanded network beyond your close friends and associates for learning. It can also be used by others seeking to learn more about you. As an action item, let's think about our social media use.

1. Which platforms do you use on social media?
2. If a prospective employer looked at your social media postings right now, what is the first thing they'd see?

Things to consider: Do you use some social media just for friends and others to gather information or learn new things? If so, which social media platforms do you use for which purposes? Have you started a professional profile on LinkedIn? If not, the résumé that you will be developing in later chapters can be easily used on that platform. If you have, you can update your LinkedIn profile in tandem with the résumé you will be working on!