



Institute for Regional
and International Studies
INTERNATIONAL DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

The Institute for Regional
and International Studies:

A GLOBAL IMPACT ON WISCONSIN



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INTRODUCTION TO **IRIS**

The International Division leads efforts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to cultivate international scholarship and engagement, promote global awareness, and prepare students for a diverse and interconnected world.

The Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS) is a pillar unit of the International Division. It plays a vital role for both the UW-Madison campus and the wider state of Wisconsin by fostering global expertise and promoting international engagement.

The nine area studies centers of IRIS—eight of which are National Resource Centers—offer a wealth of opportunities for the campus, state, and nation. From academic programs and training to research grants and outreach activities, these centers provide a valuable gateway to global engagement, putting the Wisconsin Idea into action.

Each area studies center focuses on a specific region of the world. Explore our regional and area study centers beginning on page 6.

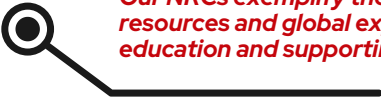
Additionally, IRIS supports the International Studies Major within the College of Letters and Science, offering a structured academic program for students pursuing careers in global affairs.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TITLE VI NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER?

Title VI National Resource Centers (NRCs) are highly competitive grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to select universities across the country on a four-year cycle. Established under Title VI of the Higher Education Act, NRCs ensure the U.S. maintains strong capacity in international education, research, and public engagement, directly contributing to national security, economic prosperity, and global understanding.

NRCs are recognized national leaders in area or international studies and specific foreign languages. This involves a large concentration of scholars, extensive library collections, and comprehensive academic programs covering the history, culture, politics, and economics of their focus regions.



Our NRCs exemplify the Wisconsin Idea by extending the university's resources and global expertise to benefit the entire state, enriching public education and supporting local communities' engagement with the world.

CORE COMPONENTS OF TITLE VI NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS

- ◆ *NRCs address critical U.S. needs, initially for national defense, now encompassing economic competitiveness, worldwide health, and diplomacy.*
- ◆ *Beyond campus, NRCs have a mandate to conduct outreach, sharing expertise with K-12 educators, businesses, government agencies, and the public to enhance international understanding.*
- ◆ *NRCs cultivate global competence by preparing K-12 students, teachers, and communities for a world of diverse cultures, and their training in language and cultural knowledge enhances the U.S. workforce's ability to engage internationally.*
- ◆ *NRC funding and collaborative environments enable new research on international issues, generating knowledge that informs policy and advances academic disciplines.*
- ◆ *NRCs prioritize the teaching of less commonly taught languages, which are often deemed critical to U.S. national interests.*

IRIS STATE AND NATIONAL IMPACT

56

WI COUNTIES
IMPACTED
BY IRIS

ADVANCING OUTREACH

In addition to the centers providing outreach to K-12 educators, they also provide outreach activities on the national and international levels. From collaborations with other universities, to hosting world-renowned scholars and professors, to administering international book awards, there are numerous IRIS initiatives that connect UW–Madison with a wider audience and enhance public knowledge of international issues.

SUPPORTING K-12 EDUCATION

Every area studies center conducts outreach to K-12 educators and libraries, providing resources, workshops, and curriculum development assistance to amplify international education in Wisconsin schools.

DEVELOPING GLOBAL COMPETENCE

By training students in less commonly taught languages and area studies knowledge, IRIS prepares a globally competent workforce. These graduates are valuable assets for Wisconsin businesses engaged in international trade, government agencies dealing with global issues, and non-profits working with international populations and refugees.

ENHANCING WISCONSIN'S GLOBAL PROFILE

A university with strong international research and educational programs elevates the state's reputation on the global stage, attracting international partnerships, investments, and talent to Wisconsin.



Public libraries



K-12 school districts

IRIS ACADEMIC IMPACT

SPECIALIZED LANGUAGE & GLOBAL EXPERTISE

Boren Awards: Programs like the Boren Awards, administered through IRIS, expand students' global outlook and introduce them to careers dedicated to U.S. national security and public service. These awards are a key initiative of the National Security Education Program (NSEP), which itself is a core part of the broader Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO).

Less Commonly Taught Languages: By specializing in languages beyond the mainstream and focusing on specific world regions, these centers open pathways to broader international engagement. Many of these languages are officially designated as critical for U.S. national security, economic competitiveness, and diplomacy.

Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowships: FLAS fellowships are funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the National Resource Centers to assist students in acquiring foreign language and either area or international studies competencies. UW-Madison's NRCs offer FLAS awards for more than 50 languages and have helped more than 2,000 UW-Madison students achieve their foreign language and cultural proficiency goals.

ACADEMIC COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

IRIS coordinates and provides administrative support for the nine area studies centers. These centers are crucial for focused research, scholar visits, and teaching on specific regions of the world.

SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH FUNDING

IRIS offers significant scholarships such as the Pre-Dissertation Travel Scholarships and Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Awards that

enable doctoral students to conduct critical field research abroad. This directly contributes to innovative research, cultivates global leadership among students, and enhances the university's reputation as a leader in international scholarship.



2,000+

FLAS STUDENTS SERVED

50+

LANGUAGES

AFRICAN STUDIES PROGRAM



The African Studies Program (ASP) continues to enrich Wisconsin libraries through its exceptional READ AFRICA program. In partnership with Brittle Paper, the Children's Africana Book Award, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, this program increases the visibility of African literature and inspires young readers throughout Wisconsin. Through READ AFRICA, resource libraries in all 15 regions of Wisconsin receive a curated selection of 10 books, including five children's books and five young adult or adult titles.

The African Studies Program outreach activities reach thousands of K-12 teachers, students, and community members annually through the READ AFRICA program, Children's African Story Hour, and more.



6,000+

K-12 TEACHERS, STUDENTS,
AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
IMPACTED ANNUALLY

ASP also offers over 175 Africa-related courses, certificates, a PhD minor, and support to over 90 faculty members and 100 graduate student affiliates. Visit africa.wisc.edu to learn more!

CENTER FOR EAST **ASIAN STUDIES**



The Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS) offers a variety of outreach activities to advance East Asian learning. The Center's "East Asia Now" series and accompanying podcast bring together scholars, policymakers, and community leaders to discuss current events in East Asia, including topics such as trade tensions impacting Wisconsin agriculture and manufacturing.

The Center for East Asian Studies also hosts the East Asia in Wisconsin Library Program, an initiative offering grants to Wisconsin libraries for collection development and programming that enriches understanding of East Asia in local communities.



The Center for East Asian Studies is dedicated to all aspects of research, education, and outreach related to China, Japan, and Korea. Additionally, the center works with the Sejong Cultural Society to organize the popular annual Wisconsin Sijo (WiSiJo) Competition, which highlights Korea's cultural heritage by giving Wisconsinites an opportunity to learn a traditional Korean poetic form. Visit eastasia.wisc.edu to learn more!

EUROPEAN STUDIES



The European Studies (ES) program runs and supports outreach programming to K-12 educators and students with the primary aim of providing information, resources and events that help to promote the study and teaching of Europe, the EU, and European issues. ES offers professional development workshops and mini-courses for educators across the state. Past sessions have helped teachers implement Wisconsin Act 30, which requires the incorporation of the Holocaust and other genocides into K-12 social studies curricula.

700

COURSES ACROSS 16
EUROPEAN LANGUAGES



ES offers workshops and resources for K-12 educators and designs content for major business and professional groups, such as the Madison International Trade Association and the American Council on Germany.

European Studies is a consortium of three externally funded research centers, including the Center for German & European Studies (CGES, a DAAD Center of Excellence), the Jean Monnet European Union Center of Excellence, and the Center for European Studies, all based in the International Division. Visit europe.wisc.edu to learn more!

IRIS NRC

IRIS NRC offers free, virtual book and film clubs every other month for K-12 educators and the general public. The clubs focus on international content and feature an expert-led discussion on a selected book or film.



500+

HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS ATTEND
WHSMUN ANNUALLY

IRIS NRC co-sponsors the Wisconsin High School Model United Nations Conference (WHSMUN) that convenes at UW–Madison every year.

IRIS NRC enhances global education through its support for intensive language programs, including partnerships with MEDLI for Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew, alongside other summer language instruction. IRIS NRC also funds new course development in international and area studies topics, enriches learning through visiting international experts, and provides educators with valuable curriculum resources to integrate global issues into their teaching. Visit irisnrc.wisc.edu to learn more!

LATIN AMERICAN CARIBBEAN, AND IBERIAN STUDIES



The Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies (LACIS) Program offers annual workshops for K-12 educators on topics such as climate change and indigenous activism, and it provides funding for initiatives that promote community engagement, such as the creation of "Nature Passports" in both English and Spanish for local families to encourage outdoor exploration. The center also works closely with the College of Menominee Nation on a range of initiatives, from joint research projects on agricultural practices, to student exchange programs, to participation in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



LACIS is a vital resource for local, state, and international engagement. Locally, LACIS provides K-12 educators with workshops on topics from climate change to indigenous activism. LACIS also collaborates through a network of university partnerships, including the Universidad de Guadalajara (Mexico) and Universidad de La Salle (Mexico). Visit lacis.wisc.edu to learn more!



LACIS plays a crucial role in supporting the learning of less commonly taught languages such as Yucatec Maya and Ecuadorian Quichua.

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES PROGRAM

The Middle East Studies Program (MESP) consistently brings global perspectives to the local community, from co-hosting engaging Children's African Story Hours that explore themes of culture and identity to organizing World Cinema Day events in partnership with the Wisconsin Film Festival. MESP provides valuable professional development for educators, offering workshops on topics like climate optimism and global learning.

50+ YEARS IN
OPERATION



MESP prepares tomorrow's leaders by equipping them with knowledge about Middle Eastern languages and cultures, offering an academic certificate and over 30 courses per semester. Visit mideast.wisc.edu to learn more!

MESP partners with groups like the Wisconsin International Resource Consortium (WIRC) and the African Studies Program to make international issues and cultural understanding accessible to K-12 students and community members.

CENTER FOR RUSSIA, EAST EUROPE, AND CENTRAL ASIA

The Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) serves as a hub for community engagement, offering a lending library and a diverse calendar of public events, including weekly lecture series, film screenings, and concerts. CREECA empowers educators through statewide workshops, sponsors the Pushkin Summer Institute for high school students, and co-sponsors a spoken Russian competition.

CREECA sponsors films in the Wisconsin Film Festival and hosts workshops for Wisconsin K-12 educators.



CREECA promotes faculty research across a range of disciplines, supports graduate and undergraduate teaching and training related to the region, and serves as a community resource through outreach activities targeted to K-12 teachers and students, other institutions of higher education, and the general public.

200+

STUDENTS TAUGHT KAZAKH, TAJIK,
UZBEK, AND UYGHUR LANGUAGES

Visit creeca.wisc.edu to learn more!

CENTER FOR **SOUTH ASIA**



The Center for South Asia (CSA) hosts the world's preeminent gathering of experts on South Asia in Wisconsin. The Annual Conference on South Asia (ACSA) stands as one of the world's largest and most influential gatherings of South Asian scholars, students, and professionals, growing year-by-year since its inception in 1971.

1,200+

ACSA ATTENDEES IN 2024



CSA is an intellectual hub with a history rooted in a long tradition of Indian studies on campus. Officially founded in 1963 as a Title VI National Resource Center, CSA has grown to include nearly 50 affiliate faculty members across various disciplines. The center is home to the South Asian Summer Language Institute, the Project Global Officer program for ROTC students, and one of the oldest South Asia study abroad programs in Varanasi. Visit southasia.wisc.edu to learn more!

CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES



The Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) is a leading force in sustainable Southeast Asian language education, building on a decades-long legacy of work. CSEAS is currently supporting isolated language educators by developing new proficiency standards, assessments, instructional materials, and asynchronous online courses. The initiative will also provide crucial scholarship support for students and explore the integration of new technologies and culturally responsive curricula.



● **120+**
● STUDENTS SPECIALIZING IN
● SOUTHEAST ASIA



CSEAS provides professional development workshops for K-12 educators and plays a national leadership role through its collaborative work with the Southeast Asian Language Council (SEALC), which focuses on professionalizing language teaching through training and curriculum development. CSEAS is also working with Madison College on a four-year initiative to establish a new Hmong Studies program, ensuring its academic expertise has a tangible impact in local Wisconsin communities. Visit seasia.wisc.edu to learn more!

GET IN TOUCH



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As a cornerstone of UW-Madison's International Division, IRIS is dedicated to offering a wealth of opportunities for the campus, state, and nation. By providing resources and hosting events in communities throughout Wisconsin, supporting less commonly taught languages, and empowering the next generation of global leaders, IRIS ensures Wisconsin's continued leadership in international affairs. To follow their ongoing impact and learn about upcoming opportunities, please visit the IRIS website or connect with IRIS on social media.

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