

February 2025

Dear Ph.D. Student,

Congratulations on your acceptance and decision to begin SIT's PhD in International Relations this coming summer! I'm pleased to welcome you into the program and provide some early guidance on what to expect in the months to come.

I serve as Chair of the International Relations PhD and Professor at SIT. My research specialties are international peace and conflict studies, political leadership, and crisis management. Joining me as faculty members in the program are Dr. Orli Fridman, Dr. Bayan Abdulhaq, Dr. Joseph Lanning, among others. Together we will be teaching program courses, serving as advisors as you develop and launch your dissertation studies, and hosting you during program residencies in Belgrade (year one) and Amman (year two).

I've put this letter together to give you some important information about what to expect in the coming months.

## ORIENTATION AND START OF PROGRAM

SIT will hold a virtual orientation to SIT on **Tuesday, May 20th from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EDT**, for new students in all of SIT's doctoral programs (PhD in International Relations, PhD in Sustainability, and EDD in Education). Please join the faculty, provost, associate provosts, and president to learn more about the institution and your classmates as well as SIT staff to learn more about the services provided to support our students. Call-in details will be provided in advance and for those of you unable to join in, we will record the session and forward the link to you afterwards.

The following week your International Relations program officially begins with a ten-day residency in Belgrade Serbia on **Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (arrival day) – Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup> (departure day)**. Your time in Belgrade will be spent getting to know your cohort, being introduced to the program structure and expectations, beginning your first doctoral-level class, *Theories and Polemics of International Relations*, and participating in site visits where you will learn about the changing politics of Europe, the challenges of refugee integration, the rise of illiberalism, and dynamics of peace and conflict in Europe.

Following the Belgrade residency, you will continue to take our *Theory and Polemics* course through the end of the semester, which will be August 8, 2025. Fall semester classes begin on September 2, 2025.

## HOW WILL TRANSFER CREDITS AND REQUIRED ELECTIVES WORK?

You have already received a list of eligible transfer courses to be applied to the 15 elective credits required to complete your Ph.D. No additional course work is required for those of you who qualify for a transfer of the full 15 credits. If your transfer allowance was under 15 credits you will work with your advisor during your first meeting in early May to choose the additional elective courses that you will take across the first two years of the program. A list of elective courses will be provided to you prior to the start of the program. All elective credits must be earned prior to taking your comprehensive exams.

## WORKLOAD

A typical semester involves 10 to 15 hours of student time per week. This includes reading, preparing postings, participating in online discussions, working on assignments, meeting with your advisor, and researching and writing papers.

Because this is a low-residency program much of your class work will occur asynchronously. However, each professor will also work with students in their courses to identify times across each semester where 1-3 synchronous classes can be scheduled. We have found that even one or two face-to-face meetings each semester greatly aids cohort dynamics, course satisfaction, and intellectual growth.

Updates on each of the required course readings will be shared closer to the start of the semester. Books can be purchased or rented online from sellers such as Amazon.com. An introduction to SIT's library system will occur during orientation.

## HOW WILL ADVISING WORK?

You will learn who your adviser is prior to the start of the summer semester and will have the chance to set up a one-on-one virtual advising session with them in early May. You will work closely with your advisor as you move through your courses, go through your first-year review, prepare and take your comprehensive exams, and develop and launch your dissertation project. Later in the program you will add three additional faculty to serve as committee members for your doctoral dissertation.

## COURSES AT A GLANCE

Term	Credits	Required Courses
SU 1	3	Theories and Polemics of International Relations (3) includes f2f component in Belgrade.
FA 1	3	Global Governance and Human Security (3)
SP 1	3	Seminar in Peace and Conflict Studies (3)

<b>SU 2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Forced Migration and Humanitarian Response (3) includes f2f component abroad (Jordan)</b>  <b>Preliminary Review (0) F2F</b>
<b>FA 2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Quantitative Research Methods (3)</b>
<b>SP 2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Qualitative Research Methods (3)</b>
<b>SU 3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Research Colloquium (3)</b>  <b>Comprehensive Exams – 0</b>
<b>FA 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Proposal Defense, IRB approval (3) * requires successful completion of comprehensive exams.</b>  <b>Doctoral and Professional Development Seminar (1)</b>
<b>SP 3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Dissertation (5)</b>  <b>Doctoral and Professional Development Seminar (1)</b>
<b>SU 4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Dissertation (5)</b>  <b>Doctoral and Professional Development Seminar (1)</b>
<b>FA 4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Dissertation (5)</b>  <b>Doctoral and Professional Development Seminar (1)</b>
<b>SP 4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Dissertation (5)</b>  <b>Dissertation Defense (1)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>+15 transfer or elective credits either transferred into SIT from previous graduate course work or earned through additional classwork at SIT.</b>

## GET TO KNOW YOUR COHORT

Because of privacy laws, SIT is unable to share personal information about future students with other future students. However, we will work with you to set up a WhatsApp page so you may begin to communicate with each other. Note that it is not intended to duplicate or replace official information and is for personal purposes only.

## SAVE THE DATE: SECOND YEAR RESIDENCY

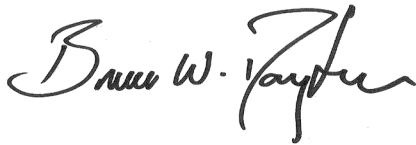
The second-year residency will take place in Jordan, with a field course on refugee response and peace and conflict in the MENA region. In Amman, students will visit with academics, government officials, local NGOs, and international organizations to understand the landscape of politics in the Middle East and North Africa and the power of regional

alliances in shaping foreign affairs. Your Jordan residency will be part of the course *Forced Migration and Humanitarian Response*. Elsewhere on the Admitted Students pages for our program you will find a full list of our doctoral courses by semester.

### **WHAT ELSE CAN I EXPECT?**

We will hold a pre-departure meeting for the cohort in late March or early April. During that meeting we will share additional logistical information about the Belgrade residency, such as arrival airport, accommodation recommendations, class locations, schedule, etc.

I am very happy that you've chosen SIT to pursue your doctoral studies. You will be studying International Relations at a time of tremendous flux in world order. I look forward to being part of your academic journey!



**Bruce W. Dayton, Ph.D.**

Chair and Professor

PhD in International Relations

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