The International Development Studies major is a designated capstone major. Seniors must complete an advanced seminar that provides them with unique opportunity to work closely with a faculty member on a focused topic of research. The seminar culminates in a written paper or project along with a formal class report. Students completing the capstone should be able to:

- demonstrate, within the context of a specialized topic in development studies specific skills and expertise acquired in earlier coursework, including original research, data analysis, clear and cogent writing, and general knowledge of major issues in development studies.

- identify, analyze and select relevant data from primary and secondary sources both library sources and on-line sources; students should be fully able to conduct library searches for relevant sources including both primary documents and secondary materials including journal articles. Students should further be able to conduct “on-line” searches so as to gain access to the total ensemble of documentation made available by official and non-governmental organizations that undertake development activities.

- acquire a working knowledge of the broader scholarly discourse pertaining to the study of development; e.g. why some nations develop rapidly while others do not, the relationship between trade and development, demography and development, tropical diseases and development, and the role of external actors in the development process.

- conceive and execute an original research project that identifies and engages with a focused problem within a specialized sub-topic of development studies.

- engage with a community of scholars, presenting one’s own work to peers and helping to further the work of those peers through discussion and critique.