



# GLOBAL LEADERS OF PENN STATE

GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Monthly Email Newsletter



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## WELCOME

by Lauren Forbes, Managing Editor

Hello! Welcome to the January edition of the Global and International Studies Newsletter for the 2024–25 school year. We hope that you had a restful break and are ready for another great semester! We’re so excited to continue sharing stories from the GLIS community! This month, I want to share how I have applied GLIS in real life! We also have a student spotlight, a course highlight, and a study abroad highlight!

If you have any feedback or would like to submit a story, please email [glis@psu.edu](mailto:glis@psu.edu). We look forward to hearing from you, and cannot wait to continue sharing stories and experiences in GLIS!



**PennState**  
College of the Liberal Arts

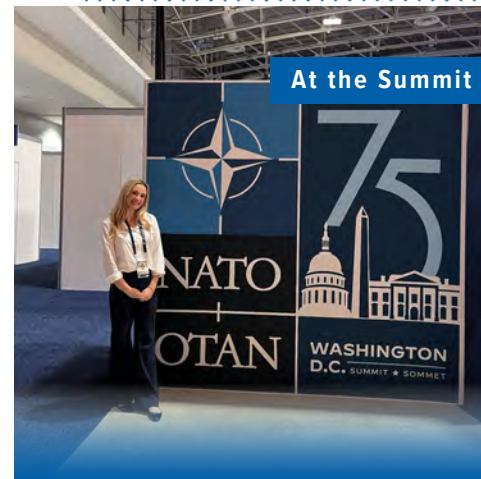
# GLIS IN REAL LIFE

By Lauren Forbes

As GLIS students, we are all fascinated by international affairs, whether it be in our concentrations, like human rights or global conflict, or whether it be through experiencing the world like traveling. This past summer, I had an amazing experience that really cemented my learnings through majoring in GLIS and made me more passionate than ever about global studies.

I got to attend the Seventy-Fifth NATO Summit in Washington, DC! Through my summer internship at the Department of State, all interns were given the option to volunteer at the summit. Though I played a small role, this was a life-changing experience for me and I am so grateful to have been able to attend.

My journey started at 3:30 a.m.! It was an early wake up time, but we had to be at the venue by 5:00 a.m. to account for security checkpoints, navigating the convention center, and setting up our post. Out of the hundreds of volunteers, I was at a smaller position called the Information Desk. This ended up being an incredibly lucky placement. The post was located in the Delegation lounge (where people who traveled with the Presidents and Prime Ministers can relax, eat, and regroup) and my job was to provide any information they needed or answer any questions that they had. On the other side of the Delegation Lounge was where the bilateral meeting rooms were located. This is where countries could meet one on one with each other.



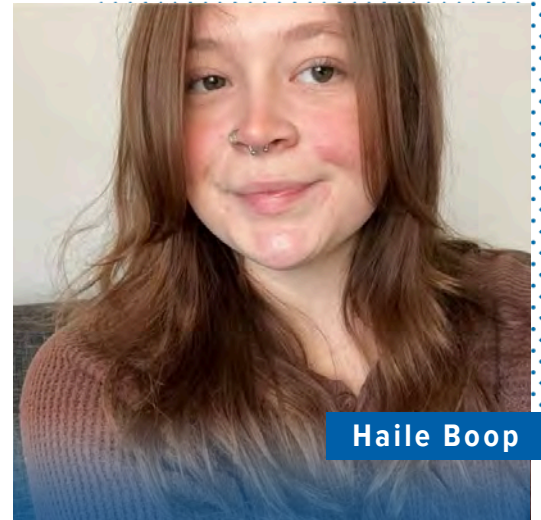
Not only did I get to interact with many different NATO delegations, I also got to get a glimpse of different Presidents and Prime Ministers walking to their meetings! Some of the people that I was starstruck by were President Zelenskyy of Ukraine, Prime Minister Trudeau from Canada, and Keir Starmer, the Prime Minister of England (he had only been elected less than a week before the Summit!)

Being able to be a small part of this huge event was very eye opening in that it furthered my love for global studies, and it confirmed that in the future I hope to be one of the actual attendees! Without being a GLIS major, I probably would have never gotten that internship that allowed me to attend this event. I have learned key skills through my coursework that lead me to a once in a lifetime opportunity.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Megg Reddy

**Haile Boop '26**  
**Global and International Studies**  
**Master of International Affairs**



Haile is an Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate (IUG) student hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio. She is currently studying for her undergraduate degree in Global and International Studies (GLIS) with a focus on global conflict, while simultaneously pursuing a master's degree in international affairs (MIA) concentrating on Middle East studies.

After having switched majors several times, Haile felt that her past academic paths did not adequately cover global issues, prompting her to explore different fields. It was during this exploration that she found GLIS. The program's extensive curriculum caught her interest, as it promised to provide a deeper understanding of international relations and global challenges.

Haile stumbled upon the IUG program while browsing through the university's website. At first, she was uncertain about pursuing a master's degree; however, upon discovering that GLIS qualified for the IUG program, her enthusiasm was rekindled. The reduced length of the IUG program at Penn State and the prospect of a faster transition into the workforce played a significant role in her decision to enroll.

Haile asserts that her undergraduate classes have been incredibly beneficial for her graduate studies. Several of her GLIS courses have addressed topics pertinent to her current coursework. She particularly mentions the Global Pathways class, which explored a range of subjects including pandemics, global power dynamics, and soft power. This wide-ranging exposure has equipped her well for her master's level courses, enabling her to understand the material more thoroughly and feel more assured in her studies.

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# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT (cont.)

Haile shares her ambitions and expectations for both the IUG program and her master's studies. Although she is uncertain about her specific career trajectory, she is intrigued by the possibility of working in the private sector or perhaps within government roles. With her focus on Middle East studies, she sees a variety of opportunities. Haile wishes to deepen her understanding of this region, a subject she is passionate about. Ultimately, she has an idealistic aim of aiding in the promotion of peace in the area.

Haile reflects on the program's challenges and her expectations, noting that it has proven to be more rigorous than she initially anticipated, especially regarding writing assignments. Nevertheless, she recognizes that this intensity has enhanced her writing capabilities and is optimistic that the experience will be advantageous in the future. Despite the hurdles, Haile maintains a positive outlook on the program's significance for her upcoming career.

She underscores the need to balance both undergraduate and graduate coursework by honing effective time management skills. Haile mentions that she limits her course load to five classes and relies on a planner to organize homework and sustain a consistent schedule.

Haile strongly endorses the IUG program, emphasizing both its advantages and its challenges. While it demands considerable effort, she feels it is rewarding, particularly for those aiming to graduate earlier. Haile also highlights the program's worth for students pursuing specific concentrations, like Middle Eastern or Asian studies, and mentions the supportive faculty available for these disciplines.

Haile aims to work in international organizations or government bodies where she can play a role in policy formulation and global strategy development. She believes the IUG program is preparing her with the essential knowledge and skills to create a meaningful impact in the field.



# COURSE SPOTLIGHT

by Cynthia Wang

## **AFR 105 African Biodiversity and Conservation Health and Environment Pathway**

AFR 105 offers a deep dive into the remarkable biodiversity of Africa, showcasing its unparalleled ecosystems, diverse wildlife, and the intricate cultural connections between people and nature. Students will journey through the vast savannas of the Serengeti, the lush rainforests of the Congo Basin, the arid deserts of the Sahara, and the unique coastal and marine environments that contribute to Africa's ecological richness. The course not only highlights the incredible array of species that call Africa home but also addresses the significant threats to this biodiversity, including habitat loss, climate change, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict.

Through engaging lectures, case studies, and discussions, students will analyze the challenges of balancing conservation with economic development and explore the pivotal role of local communities, indigenous knowledge, and international cooperation in preserving these natural treasures. AFR 105 encourages critical thinking and fosters a deeper understanding of how biodiversity impacts ecological health, cultural heritage, and global sustainability. By the end of the course, students will have gained a holistic perspective on Africa's biodiversity and the tools to contribute meaningfully to conservation efforts worldwide.

# EDUCATION ABROAD EXPERIENCE- FALL 2024

by Faith Turnbull

## Faith Turnbull- Vienna, Austria Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

### Program Overview

This past fall, I spent four months living and learning in Vienna, Austria through the IES Vienna Program. The program offers classes for varying majors, catering to people with different interests, and is offered to a multitude of universities across the nation. Thanks to this opportunity, I enrolled in five courses, two of which were excursion-focused where we traveled around Vienna visiting culturally rich museums, restaurants, and markets. One class was taught completely in German, which aided in the completion of my German minor, and another class was an internship seminar that coincided with the internship I had while abroad at Immersium: Wien, an immersive art exhibition in the heart of the city. Through these classes, I was completely immersed in the Viennese culture.



Faith Turnbull

### Semester Highlights

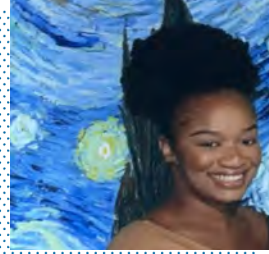
Studying abroad provides countless opportunities to explore different countries and cultures that ultimately enrich who we are. Since Vienna was very centrally located within Europe, I was able to travel to ten different countries and visit thirteen cities. The ability to travel on the weekends was defined as a highlight of the semester. Another highlight was doing the IES Language Buddy Exchange Program where I met weekly with a native Austrian to better my German and practice her English. Elena, my buddy whom I was matched with, and I became great friends and learned so much from each other. We still keep in touch today through writing letters and WhatsApp.

### Semester Challenges

As with any major change, moving to a new country with a foreign language came with some challenges. Although I was familiar with the language, life in Austria was different from life in the United States. I had to navigate public transportation (which I now love and wish we had the U-Bahn), make new friends as I was the only person from Penn State in my program, and deal with homesickness and culture shock. Despite some challenges, I wouldn't change this experience for the world. I've grown immensely since my time abroad, acquiring skills of independence, confidence, and adaptability.



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