

# SMALL WORLD NEWSLETTER

International Studies • The Ohio State University • 33 Townshend Hall • 1885 Neil Avenue • Columbus, OH • 43210-1222 • USA  
Phone: 614-292-9657 • <http://internationalstudies.osu.edu/>

**OCTOBER 2018**



## **NEW**

### **INFORMATION SECURITY MINOR!**

International Studies is pleased to announce the introduction of its Information Security minor! This minor is a cooperative venture between the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, the office of the Chief Information Officer of The Ohio State University and International Studies.

Students will take coursework in such topics as network security, public policy, and social and ethical issues in computing.

Please contact International Studies for specialized advising should you wish to pursue this minor. Here is a brief description of it.

Today's world has become more complex, technology more advanced, and states more interdependent making ready-to-hand in-

formation on all facets of human existence unprecedented in its diversity and volume. Whether it relates to national economic strategy, corporate product development, or advanced weapons research, much of this information has great economic and/or strategic value to competitors as well as its owners. The means of storing this information is shifting toward the digital, making its protection an increasingly major preoccupation for a wide array of actors, including governments, research agencies, institutions of higher education, corporations, and marketers. The need for protecting information is acute.

Lying at the heart of the larger data protection enterprise called cybersecurity, the study of information security addresses broad issues relating to the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information and data, and places the study of information security in its economic, so-

cial and security context. For those who wish to pursue a career in cybersecurity, it is designed to provide a solid conceptual and technical foundation for the acquisition of the advanced computer skills that they will need.

### **STUDENT AWARDED \$12,000 RESEARCH GRANT**

Sandy Lackmann, a senior student with majors in International Studies and Spanish and a minor in Human Rights, was awarded a \$12,000 Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research grant in support of her honors thesis titled "Advocacy or Abuse? The Role of U.S. Immigration Law in the Lives of Asylum-Seeking Central American Women." We strongly encourage our students to consider research as a part of their undergraduate career here at OSU. In this case, an outstanding scholarship was earned. Here is her story.



Sandy Lackmann (on right) with a colleague from Ayuda-VA.

I became interested in immigration law and asylum policy while brainstorming ways to combine my three areas of study – majors in International Studies and Spanish and a minor in Human Rights – with social advocacy and a focus on women’s rights. When I returned to my hometown of Raleigh, North Carolina in Summer 2017 after a semester in Costa Rica, I found the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants North Carolina field office, where I spent my summer internship supporting two immigration attorneys and their legal assistant. The experience of getting to know our diverse background of clients and helping them towards better lives for themselves and their families resonated strongly with me. During my third year at Ohio State, I developed my thesis project with the help of my fantastic advisor, Dr. Kendra McSweeney from the Department of

Geography. The abstract for my research project is as follows:

*How are asylum-seeking Central American women—especially those fleeing domestic and gender-based gang violence —processed within the U.S. immigration law infrastructure, such as the immigration courts? This question has become especially trenchant since the US Department of Justice this summer overturned years of case law to deem this population (women deemed “unable to leave relationships”) ineligible for asylum. My research project, titled “Advocacy or Abuse?” engages this high stakes and highly dynamic legal terrain through an ethnographic study of non-profits and legal clinics in the DC-Maryland-Virginia area who are working on behalf of these women. Through multiple interviews with immigration attorneys and legal scholars as well as participant observation of legal proceedings (e.g., affidavit composition, court appearances), I tracked, over three months, the processes by which women negotiate their precarious legal status from border to green card, or deportation.*

I found that even in a region (the DC area and surroundings) with a significant array of legal support and advocacy for the immigrant community, the ability of the immigration courts and judges to remain impartial and provide fair legal proceedings fell woefully short, therefore compromising the validity of their role as judicial arbitrators in the immigration process. Further, I found that the demand for low-cost legal services far exceeded the supply, despite impressive efforts by area non-profits and legal clinics. The results of my work fill a gap in the legal and academic literatures on the

most recent barriers to procedural justice for asylum seekers in U.S. Immigration Law. This research is laying the foundation for my eventual career in public-interest immigration law, through which I will strive to serve as an advocate for vulnerable immigrant populations.

In conjunction with working on my research and studying for the LSAT, I was a full-time summer intern at Ayuda-VA, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing low-cost social and legal services to immigrants in the D.C.-MD-VA area. The experience in the field of immigration law was extremely valuable, and I was able to not only utilize what I learned the previous summer at USCRI but also gain more knowledge of the workings of immigration law.

Highlights of my time at Ayuda included protesting with my boss and coworkers on the steps of the Department of Justice and serving as the official interpreter for our clients at their green card interviews. While I was admittedly teary-eyed when my ten weeks at Ayuda were over, I would love to return as a law student intern or maybe, one day, as an immigration attorney.

This semester, which will be my last before I graduate in December, I’ve started working as a Legal Assistant/Paralegal at the Columbus office of the Herman Legal Group, an immigration law firm based out of Cleveland, Ohio. While going to law school and becoming an immigration attorney is my ultimate goal, I will be taking at least one year off to work in the field and dedicate more time to volunteering in the community before I apply to law schools.