

Spring 2027 Project Menu

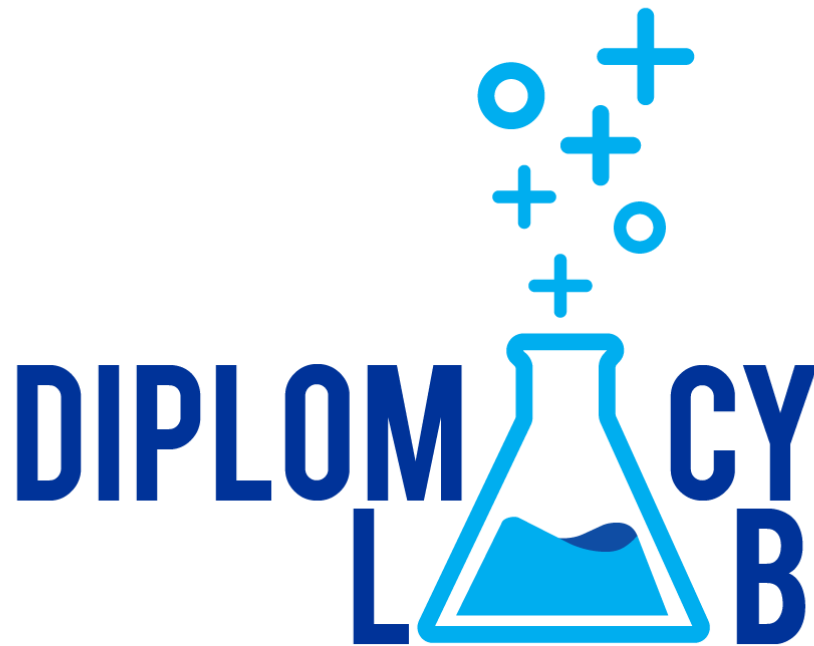


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Project ID	643
Project Name	AI: Next Generation Design for American Embassies Overseas
Office	Design and Engineering, Architectural Design Division
Bureau	Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO)
Project Description	A partnership between the U.S. Department of State (DoS) Diplomacy Lab program, The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) Architecture Design Division and universities will collaborate through a design studio curriculum that explores next generation U.S. Embassy design, and the effects Artificial Intelligence (AI) design tools may have on future U.S. embassy design. OBO is the single real property manager for the planning, acquisition, design, construction, operations, maintenance, and disposal of U.S. governmental diplomatic and consular properties overseas. OBO provides the most effective facilities for U.S. diplomacy abroad ensuring the United States is safer, stronger, and more prosperous. Architectural Design students will engage with an OBO Embassy or Consulate site, program, standards and requirements to develop an understanding of U.S. Embassy and Consulate design. The technically demanding building typology must demonstrate American values while remaining secure and resilient facilities. These two priorities are often in conflict and demand creative, analytical problem solving of designers. To assist in this iterative process, student design efforts will take place predominately within a suite of AI driven design tools. The design suite will include AI tools for Site Planning, Feasibility Studies, Building Design and Planning, Environmental Analysis, Visualization, Facilities Operations and Life Cycle Cost. Students will work directly with OBO Architects and Engineers and design industry professionals who currently have portfolios with multiple OBO New Embassy and Consulate project designs. At the end of the semester students will assemble briefings of their projects and findings on the use of AI for OBO leadership review.
Final Product Format	Digital Presentation and Briefing
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Architecture</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	More information about OBO can be found here: https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/bureau-of-overseas-buildings-operations OBO Project Portfolio can be found here: https://oboportfolio.state.gov/
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	649
Project Name	U.S. Embassy Major Restoration Design Studio
Office	Design and Engineering, Architectural Design Division
Bureau	Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO)
Project Description	The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) is responsible for the design, construction, operations, and maintenance of all Department of State real estate assets overseas, including U.S. Embassies and Consulates. In addition to New Embassy Compounds, OBO manages a large portfolio of culturally significant historic properties across the globe. Many of these properties have reached, or are approaching, the end of their useful lifespan. Given their locations—often in close proximity to host government facilities—and the scarcity of appropriate sites in densely developed capital cities, OBO frequently rehabilitates and adaptively reuses existing Embassies and Consulates rather than building new ones. Many of these facilities were constructed prior to World War II or during the wave of European reconstruction that followed it. While these buildings were purpose-built for their era, they now face a critical challenge: by law, any Major Rehabilitation project must bring the facility into compliance with OBO's current standards, including modern physical and technical security, fire and life safety, accessibility, performance, secure workplace, and public amenities requirements. Integrating these contemporary requirements into buildings that are 70 or more years old presents significant design and engineering challenges. The Diplomacy Lab Design Studio is a fully immersive program created to explore these challenges and develop real-world solutions for preserving and modernizing this segment of the OBO portfolio. Beyond adapting existing structures, projects may also require additional space—such as a New Office Annex (NOX) or other building typologies—to fully support the mission's work with the host government. OBO Design Managers and Architects will collaborate with Studio Faculty and Critics to develop a semester curriculum guiding student exploration of a selected OBO site, its program, and its applicable standards and requirements. We recommend including a travel component so students can survey the chosen mission site, meet with post staff and management, and gain firsthand insight into the work conducted at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate—while also performing essential cultural and contextual research.
Final Product Format	Digital Book or Webpage
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Architecture</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	The program has an intensive design solution exploration component. It is best suited for a professionally accredited architectural design program (advanced levels of three year M. Arch or five year B.Arch)
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	653
Project Name	Mapping China's Interests and Activities in Burma: Intersections with U.S. National Interests
Office	Pol-Econ Section
Embassy	Burma
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	As the United States sharpens its strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific, Burma has emerged as a critical, yet understudied, arena where U.S. and Chinese interests converge and collide. China is Burma's most influential external actor, extending political, economic, and military support to the regime in Naypyitaw – support that safeguards Beijing's economic interests amid the country's ongoing civil conflict and deepens China's entrenchment in a nation at the heart of mainland Southeast Asia. Before Embassy Rangoon can chart an effective China strategy for Burma, it must first build a rigorous, evidence-based picture of Beijing's footprint across the country: its economic investments and Belt and Road infrastructure projects; security and military-adjacent engagements with both Naypyitaw and non-state actors such as ethnic armed organizations (EAOs); diplomatic influence operations and information/media presence; and the nexus of China-linked transnational organized crime – including cyber scam operations, trafficking in persons, and drug trafficking. Without this foundational analysis, any U.S. strategy risks being reactive rather than proactive, leaving Washington blind to levers of influence or vulnerabilities that bear directly on American interests in regional stability, economic access, and countering malign influence. The project's core deliverable will be an analytical research paper mapping the scope, scale, and trajectory of China's interests and activities in Burma, identifying where these activities intersect – through competition, complementarity, or conflict – with U.S. national security, economic, and diplomatic interests. Critically, the paper will translate this mapping into a forward-looking policy analysis: where can the United States most effectively counter Chinese influence, where should Washington deepen its own engagement to fill gaps left by Beijing, and where might the Mission need to adjust its approach to relevant actors – including the Naypyitaw regime and opposition and EAOs – in light of China's evolving posture. The goal is not simply to describe the landscape, but to identify concrete, actionable opportunities that can sharpen U.S. strategic choices. Complementing this paper, the project will also produce an AI-enabled platform for tracking, visualizing, and analyzing these findings – transforming static research into a dynamic, decision-support tool. Ideally, this platform will be built for sustainability, allowing the Mission to continue populating it with new data long after the project concludes, ensuring its value extends well beyond the initial research effort. This Diplomacy Lab project offers a graduate school team a rare opportunity to partner directly with the Department of State on a live, high-stakes policy challenge shaping U.S. engagement in Southeast Asia. The resulting product will directly inform Embassy Rangoon's forthcoming China strategy, giving students a front-row seat to see their research shape real policy decisions at a pivotal moment in U.S.-Burma-China relations.
Final Product Format	The project's core deliverable will be an analytical research paper mapping the scope, scale, and trajectory of China's interests and activities in Burma, identifying where these activities intersect – through competition, complementarity, or conflict – with U.S. national security, economic, and diplomatic interests. Critically, the paper will translate this mapping into a forward-looking policy analysis: where can the United States most effectively counter Chinese influence, where should Washington deepen its own engagement to fill gaps left by Beijing, and where might the Mission need to adjust its

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Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	654
Project Name	Building Lesotho's AI Future
Office	Political Economic Section
Embassy	Lesotho
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	Lesotho is an unlikely but consequential frontier in the global competition over artificial intelligence governance and digital infrastructure. As the first African nation to adopt 5G networks and party to a \$6.2 billion agreement with U.S. firm Convalt Energy to construct a hydropower dam and AI data center, Lesotho possesses both the ambition and the emerging infrastructure to become a regional hub for AI development in Southern Africa. This proposal requests a Diplomacy Lab team to conduct a comprehensive policy review of Lesotho's national AI Policy and Implementation Plan, assessing its alignment with international best practices on data privacy, algorithmic accountability, and consumer protection. Building on this review, the team will develop tailored policy recommendations for Lesotho's Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) that promote responsible AI governance while maximizing the economic and social benefits of technology adoption for Lesotho's government, private sector, and citizens. These recommendations should address regulatory frameworks for AI deployment, data protection standards, and mechanisms to promote access to AI-driven services across urban and rural populations. This engagement carries particular urgency given Lesotho's recent decision to join China's World AI Cooperation Organization (WAICO) as a founding member, a move that raises concerns about the long-term influence Beijing may exert over Lesotho's digital ecosystem, data governance standards, and critical infrastructure decisions. To help safeguard Lesotho's digital sovereignty and strengthen its resilience against malicious cyber activity, the Diplomacy Lab team will also produce cybersecurity recommendations for the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) and the Lesotho Cybersecurity Incident Response Team (CSIRT), focusing on incident response capacity, critical infrastructure protection, and secure-by-design principles for AI data centers and 5G networks. By pairing sound AI governance guidance with robust cybersecurity recommendations, this project will support Lesotho's continued technological leadership on the continent while reinforcing its partnership with the United States as a trusted, transparent, and secure alternative to Chinese-led digital infrastructure initiatives. The research will directly inform U.S. Embassy Maseru's engagement strategy and contribute to broader U.S. objectives of promoting a free, open, and secure digital ecosystem in Africa.
Final Product Format	A 20-50 page policy paper for MICSTI giving an overall policy review, areas in need of further details, a list of areas of capacity building for cyber security, and policy recommendations that promote a U.S. approach to AI governance.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Cyber Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	655
Project Name	Responsible Generative AI for Diplomatic Language Training and Assessment
Office	HR/NFATC/LS/LTA
Bureau	Human Resources (HR)
Project Description	Generative AI is rapidly reshaping how people learn, use, and evaluate language, creating significant opportunities for diplomatic language education. AI-enabled tools can support personalized learning, authentic language practice, feedback, and assessment, but their growing use also raises critical questions about validity, reliability, fairness, multilingual bias, transparency, privacy, and human oversight. These challenges are especially important in the diplomatic context, where language proficiency supports effective communication, professional readiness, and U.S. engagement around the world. This project will explore how the Department of State can harness generative AI to strengthen diplomatic language training and assessment while preserving the quality and integrity of human-centered language education. A university research team will examine emerging uses of generative AI, identify promising applications and associated risks, and consider how AI performs across languages, proficiency levels, accents, and dialects. The project will translate this research into practical, evidence-based recommendations for evaluating and responsibly adopting AI-enabled language tools, with particular attention to where AI can add value, where human judgment should remain central, and how innovation can advance without compromising fairness, validity, or trust.
Final Product Format	A 15–20 page research report culminating in a practical Responsible AI Framework for Diplomatic Language Education and Assessment. The report should include an executive summary, a landscape analysis of current and emerging uses of generative AI in language training and assessment, a risk-and-opportunity matrix, and evidence-based recommendations for responsible adoption, evaluation, and human oversight. The university team will also deliver a concise executive briefing and final presentation highlighting key findings and actionable recommendations for Department stakeholders.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	This project is designed to be completed within one academic semester (~4 months). It is intentionally interdisciplinary, bringing together research in generative AI, applied linguistics, language education and assessment, responsible AI governance, and human-AI collaboration. Students will be encouraged to draw on current academic research and relevant federal guidance on responsible AI, as well as emerging research on multilingual AI performance, fairness and bias, validity and reliability, transparency, privacy, and human oversight. Preliminary resources and relevant Department context can be provided to the selected university team(s) at the beginning of the semester. The project team will also help identify representative language-training and assessment use cases to ground the research in real-world diplomatic language needs. No access to classified information is anticipated; the project can be conducted using unclassified materials, publicly available research, and appropriate Department resources.

Suggested Academic Level	Graduate
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Project ID	656
Project Name	U.S.-Leverage for a Sustainable Cyprus Settlement, Eastern Mediterranean Stability, and Türkiye-EU Integration
Office	U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul, Türkiye, EUR
Embassy	Türkiye
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	The Cyprus dispute is the longest-running unresolved conflict in modern European diplomacy and, since 2004, has functioned as the single most concrete obstacle to Türkiye's EU accession process — a process effectively frozen for over a decade despite periodic political will on both sides to revive it. Three developments make this an unusually live moment to study the problem. First, Turkish Cypriot politics has shifted: after years of two-state advocacy under the previous leadership, Turkish Cypriots elected a pro-federation candidate in October 2025, reopening space for a bi-zonal, bi-communal settlement that had appeared closed since the 2017 Crans-Montana talks collapsed. Second, the UN Secretary-General has reportedly pursued his most sustained push toward a resumption of talks since 2017. Third, Ambassador to Türkiye Tom Barrack has been described as an active, informal channel between Washington and Ankara on Cyprus — though this specific characterization comes from open reporting rather than confirmed Department guidance, and I was unable to find Content Commons material addressing either Ambassador Barrack's role or the current state of settlement talks, so this premise should be validated with EUR/SE before the project is finalized. Together, this convergence — a receptive Turkish Cypriot leadership, UN momentum, and an unusually well-positioned U.S. interlocutor — creates a rare window that the project is designed to help the Department think through systematically, rather than reactively. Cyprus sits at the intersection of three strategic priorities the Department is actively managing, making it far from a peripheral European file. It touches NATO cohesion, since Greek-Turkish bilateral friction has repeatedly complicated NATO planning and U.S. basing and defense-cooperation decisions in the Eastern Mediterranean; recent engagement on both sides of that rivalry — Secretary Rubio's meetings with Greek FM Gerapetritis and Turkish FM Fidan around the 2026 NATO Ankara Summit — underscores how central both allies remain to current U.S. defense diplomacy in the region. 1) Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Secures Historic Defense Investment from NATO Allies, Powering American Industry 2) Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Fidan It also touches Eastern Mediterranean energy security: Secretary Rubio's August 2026 call with Greek FM Gerapetritis specifically addressed U.S.-Greece cooperation ""in the Eastern Mediterranean,"" and his earlier calls with Gerapetritis and with Cypriot FM Kombos have consistently flagged energy as a pillar of the bilateral relationship — evidence that EastMed hydrocarbon stability is an active, current Department priority rather than a background consideration. 3) Secretary Rubio's Call with Foreign Minister Gerapetritis 4) Secretary Rubio's Call with Republic of Cyprus Foreign Minister Kombos And it touches the challenge of managing two treaty allies simultaneously: a durable settlement would remove a recurring source of friction between Greece and Türkiye — two allies Washington needs aligned on Syria, the Black Sea, and broader Eastern

	Mediterranean security — while stabilizing the investment climate for U.S. energy and infrastructure interests in the region. Ambassador Barrack's position gives him leverage that neither a single-country ambassador nor a UN envoy typically has. His roles touching Syria and Iraq, alongside his ambassadorship to Türkiye, give him a genuinely regional portfolio that overlaps directly with Ankara's core interests — reconstruction contracts, sanctions questions, and defense-procurement issues such as F-35 access. That breadth lets him plausibly sequence Cyprus flexibility alongside issues Türkiye cares about elsewhere in the region, without needing to formally link them in a way that would politically complicate either track. There is also a personal incentive structure at work: a Cyprus breakthrough would be a signature, personally attributable achievement — one that could reframe scrutiny of his closeness to Ankara as leverage rather than liability, both in Washington and with the host government. These are working assumptions of the project rather than confirmed Department assessments of Ambassador Barrack's mandate, and are worth a quick validation pass with S/EUR or the front office before this framing is used in any external-facing product. The project develops a comprehensive settlement framework organized around four shared principles: a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation; a phased security transition; joint hydrocarbon development; and explicit linkage to Türkiye's EU accession process. From that shared foundation, the project builds three negotiating scenarios: a balanced compact positioned roughly equidistant between Greek Cypriot/Greek/EU and Turkish/Turkish Cypriot interests; a variant weighted toward Turkish and Turkish Cypriot priorities; and a variant weighted toward Greek Cypriot, Greek, and EU priorities. Each scenario is evaluated across three dimensions — its political architecture (governance, security guarantees, territorial adjustments), its economic logic (EastMed energy routing, EU structural funds, reconstruction financing), and its regional implications (effects on Eastern Mediterranean/Middle East security architecture and on Türkiye's EU accession trajectory). The end product is a policy tool, not a fixed proposal: a resource for anticipating the likely red lines and opening positions of each stakeholder — Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Greece, Türkiye, the UK, and the EU — and for identifying where a mediator, whether Ambassador Barrack or, potentially, President Trump directly, could realistically move the parties toward common ground. A Cyprus settlement would also carry weight beyond the region itself. It would fit a broader pattern of this administration positioning itself as a dealmaker on long-frozen conflicts — a pattern visible in the Armenia-Azerbaijan TRIPP framework, the Israel-Lebanon trilateral track, and the Gaza Board of Peace process. 5) The Anniversary of a Historic Breakthrough and the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) 6) Secretary of State Marco Rubio with Lebanese Ambassador to the United States Nada Hamadeh Moawad and Israeli Ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter at a Trilateral Framework Signing Ceremony Ending a fifty-year dispute that has outlasted numerous prior mediation efforts — including UN-led talks at the Secretary-General level — would stand as a visible, attributable foreign policy achievement with the kind of historical resonance that draws international recognition, comparable to the reception the Armenia-Azerbaijan agreement has received. For an administration
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	attentive to how its diplomatic record is perceived globally, a durable Cyprus settlement offers a rare combination: a solvable problem, a receptive counterpart in Ankara, and an outcome legible to audiences well beyond U.S. or Turkish domestic politics.
Final Product Format	The office would ideally receive a 10–15 page policy and options paper, accompanied by a 10–15 slide executive presentation. Where possible, the deliverable should incorporate maps, economic indicators, stakeholder positions, and other data visualizations to make the analysis accessible and actionable for policymakers. The end product is a policy tool, not a fixed proposal: a resource for anticipating the likely red lines and opening positions of each stakeholder — Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Greece, Türkiye, the UK, and the EU — and for identifying where a mediator (Ambassador Barrack, potentially with President Trump's direct involvement) could realistically move the parties toward common ground.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	657
Project Name	Trade Regime Analysis for Commercial Exports (TRACE)
Office	Directorate for Defense Trade Controls-Licensing (DDTC-L)
Embassy	
Bureau	Political-Military Affairs (PM)
Project Description	Help one of the State Department's only regulatory bodies analyze global military export control regimes! The International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) is the United States' principal policy instrument restricting the export of sensitive military items. The Department of State's Directorate for Defense Trade Controls-Licensing (DDTC-L) implements the ITAR to ensure that commercial sales of military commodities protect our industry, support our allies, and strengthen our warfighters. Similarly, U.S. partners and competitors have their own export control regimes to advance their own goals. This project seeks to better understand the export regimes of foreign countries and how those regimes may impact DDTC's mission. Students and faculty will select one or two regions (DDTC considers Western Hemisphere and Europe priority regions) and research foreign governments' multilateral agreements and domestic policies/legislation, particularly watching for pending changes. A successful final product will analyze the most important policies impacting U.S. commercial sales from each country in the selected region(s). This may include new protectionist policies, misaligned commodity controls, substantial foreign manufacturing agreements, or diplomatic reactions towards or away from U.S. military procurement. This information will be incorporated into existing products to help inform DDTC's adjudication of license applications and messaging to our partners.
Final Product Format	The final product will be determined jointly with the project supervisor, likely to include a long-form research paper and a presentation to members of DDTC.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arms Control/Non-Proliferation</i>
Additional Information	- Students and faculty should familiarize themselves with the various license applications that DDTC controls to hone their research and recommendations specifically to the marketing; permanent and temporary export; brokering; manufacturing, warehousing, and service agreements; and other commercial sales that DDTC oversees. https://www.pmddtc.state.gov/ddtc_public?id=ddtc_kb_article_page&sys_id=%2024d528fddbfc930044f9ff621f961987 - The use of artificial intelligence is welcome. However, all final products must include a complete bibliography, including chatbot prompts. Whenever possible, primary source documents must be used (public announcements, legislative documents, public MOUs, public export regulations, etc.). - The following multilateral policies / regimes provide important context and will likely be included in the final product but should not be the focus of the analysis to avoid redundancy with existing work: AUKUS, Non-Proliferation Treaty, Missile Technology

	Control Regime, Wassenaar Arrangement, Nuclear suppliers group, the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) Program, and Australia Group.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	658
Project Name	Tonga: Marketing Juice, From Lemons to Lemonade
Office	Pol/Econ Section
Embassy	Tonga
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	A major Tongan agricultural exporter has begun using agricultural waste products to create organic beverages out of watermelon, lime, ginger, and turmeric. As one of the largest Tongan owned companies, it is eager to begin exporting its health juice to major export markets. The company has a strong history in exporting produce, but is new to marketing consumer goods. This project would be an opportunity to help a real company develop a marketing strategy for a niche product that would help its juice brand expand throughout Asia, the Middle East, and America, identify key demographics and potential export markets. The project would increase Tongan economic resilience, helping achieve a key U.S. foreign policy goal.
Final Product Format	A short report and presentation to the CEO, or his delegated team.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Marketing</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	659
Project Name	A Platform for Automatic Retrieval of Construction and Maintenance Documents for U.S. Embassies to Facilitate their Upkeep post construction.
Office	The New United States Embassy in Port Louis
Embassy	Mauritius
Bureau	Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO)
Project Description	The process of constructing U.S. embassies is composed of several stages and is carried out by teams of many different experts, including engineers, project managers, quality control officers, security officers, architects, and many other professionals. After completion, it is up to those at post to maintain and understand the intricacies of the building and its systems. The OBO team at the U.S. Embassy in Port Louis is made up of electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, architects, project controls specialists, and many others hired by the State Department who have familiarized themselves with the project and been on-site throughout the construction process to ensure proper building practices and quality. Once we are gone, all of this will be left to professionals who did not witness the construction and are less familiar with its ins and outs. This means we need to properly document every technical and physical aspect of the building, prepare maintenance documents and specifications, and ensure these documents are readily accessible to those who come after us. Currently, a manual is available and handed over to a maintenance team, however it does not include other relevant materials that could be useful in some situations, such as construction documentation about how and when something was installed. Additionally, quick retrieval of manual and supplemental information, especially on-site and using mobile devices, is difficult. Let's say the stone finish attached to the building façade begins to detach and fall off five years from now. Getting to the bottom of why this is happening and developing remediation strategies would require significant digging through records, specs, installation information, and perhaps even email correspondence. Instead, imagine being able to take a picture or quickly describe the issue and automatically retrieve the building's history, progress photos, specifications, and any other relevant information immediately, that's what we want. This capability would be especially useful if made available on any U.S. embassy mobile device, helping maintenance and on-site teams determine when direct action can be taken, for example, ""we can fix this now"" versus ""this is a bigger issue"", and equipping the maintenance team with direct remediation guidance from a secure, knowledgeable database. This project would entail extensive data collection and organization, planning a secure architecture and deployment platform for U.S. government use, and working alongside maintenance teams to design visual guides and easy-to-follow processes that can be readily accessed, understood, and most importantly useful.
Final Product Format	The final deliverable would be composed of data analysis and organization mainly, and possibly an early-stage study of how the platform being described in this proposal can be developed.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>

Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Architecture</i>
	Background on the New Embassy Compound in Mauritius: Overview: The site is composed of seven distinct buildings in a 11.77 acre plot of land located in Moka Smart City, Bagatelle. The property is located just off the M1 Motorway, the primary vehicular highway on the island. The site is one of many former sugar plantations on the island. The architecture: The architecture is based on the cultural significance and natural beauty of the Mauritian mountains and the Le Morne cultural landscape. Breakaway slaves climbed the remote faces of the mountainsides, natural fortresses from their captors, and established small communities on the elevated mountaintops. This has come to reflect the shared concepts of freedom from oppression, independence, and self-governance. The New Embassy Compound is a series of simple stone clad volumes split by a series of crevasse courtyards. The organization of the complex allows for a continual connection to the exterior landscape and views to the mountain backdrop between the discrete program volumes or petals. Timeline: Construction is expected to reach substantial completion by summer of next year. Office size: There are ~24 employees in the OBO office who support on-site construction. Additional info: We expect that one semester could suffice to complete the deliverable. The students will be working alongside the a digital technologies lead at post, who has expertise in the systems that can be used as well as on-site expertise. Students will also interact with management officers and others working at the OBO office to understand current systems and procedures. Research: And we would advise the students to research about the NEC in Mauritius : https://mu.usembassy.gov/the-new-u-s-embassy-port-louis/ and about OBO Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations - https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/bureau-of-overseas-buildings-operations/
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	660
Project Name	Digital Diplomacy Insights: Measuring Public Sentiment and Engagement Across U.S. Embassy Kampala's Facebook and X Platforms
Office	PD, U.S. Embassy Uganda
Embassy	Uganda
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	U.S. Embassy Kampala's Facebook and X pages have become flashpoints for negative sentiment and likely organized trolling, driven by a convergence of sensitive developments over the past year and the influence of our strategic competitors, most notably China, whose false narratives, predatory economic narratives, and coordinated amplification tactics seek to undermine U.S. credibility and offer an alternative model of engagement in East Africa. Uganda's January 2026 elections and the subsequent reports of human rights violations by the Ugandan government have also fueled some public criticism of the Ugandan government. These take the form of replies on the Embassy's digital platforms that were frequently unrelated to the Embassy's social media posts. For example, during the 2026 presidential election, the Embassy issued two standard consular security alerts for American citizens on general safety reminders. These posts drew overwhelmingly negative and politically charged reactions, which made reference to reports of security forces rounding up and torturing opposition leaders and which criticized the United States for indifference, selective concern, or complicity. The alerts became unintended lightning rods for broader political anger, illustrating how timing and context can overshadow routine consular messaging and expose an expectation gap over perceived U.S. moral leadership during national crises. This dynamic is not without precedent: Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) generated a substantial and sustained wave of negative sentiment toward the Embassy's platforms. This project will determine whether the current backlash is a continuation of that longer-running trend or a distinct, more recent phenomenon. This has further been compounded by a U.S. Travel Advisory Level 4 – Do Not Travel designation issued in connection with the regional Ebola outbreak. All of this has resulted in increased online negative sentiment. Together, these dynamics demand a clear, evidence-based understanding of what is driving the backlash, who is behind it, where they are located, and critically why, so PDS can shift the sentiment needle and rebuild constructive engagement that supports digital freedom and reflects an America First approach grounded in sovereignty, reciprocity, and the clear-eyed advancement of U.S. strategic interests. A central research question for this project is audience origin: for each platform, PDS needs to understand whether engagement (positive, negative, or organized) is coming from audiences across the country, restricted to urban areas and Kampala specifically, from the Ugandan diaspora, or from suspected paid/inauthentic strategic competitors. Disentangling these audience segments is essential to determining whether backlash reflects genuine domestic sentiment, an urban/elite phenomenon, diaspora-driven narratives, or coordinated manipulation — each of which requires a unique response. To determine whether today's backlash reflects a genuinely new phenomenon or a longer-running trend, students will collect and analyze sentiment data beginning with the period surrounding Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA). This will allow PDS to distinguish sentiment attributable to recent developments (the 2026 election

	and Ebola travel advisory) from deeper, more persistent currents of anti-U.S. sentiment, and to assess the tone and trajectory of audience engagement over time. Economic diplomacy is a growing U.S. priority, consistent with our America First Foreign Assistance framework, which prioritizes trade over aid, opportunity over dependency, and investment over assistance. Understanding how Ugandan audiences receive this messaging, and where they are located (Uganda-wide, Kampala, diaspora, or inauthentic accounts), will help PDS calibrate its economic communications to counter strategic-competitor narratives — particularly China’s efforts to position itself as the preferred partner — and ensure our messaging lands accurately. This analysis will build on PDS’ limited Boeing sentiment case study analysis, which generated one of the Embassy’s highest engagement rates on economic-diplomacy content to date and which found that However, the post also resulted in mixed positive and negative sentiment as it coincided with the continued Level 4 Travel Advisory, especially on Facebook. In addition to economic policy, PDS regularly engages Ugandan audiences across a range of thematic pillars including politics, health, education, refugee issues, alumni engagement, and sports diplomacy, and needs a clearer picture of which themes perform best on which platforms and among which audience segments; this will assist post in identifying which themes most effectively emphasize our foreign policy priorities while countering strategic competitors’ narratives. This project gives students a rare opportunity to engage directly with a live, high-stakes public diplomacy challenge. By analyzing real engagement data from the Embassy's own platforms, students will help PDS understand not just what Ugandan audiences are saying, but why and who is saying it, disentangling reactions tied to political developments from those tied to public health messaging, mapping where engagement is geographically or organizationally rooted, identifying what the Embassy can do to strengthen trust, and clarifying which content themes are the most effective vehicles for engagement on each platform and each audience segment. Findings will directly inform how Embassy Kampala communicates with foreign audiences going forward, giving students a concrete, visible stake in shaping U.S. public messaging in East Africa. Students will: Analyze Sentiment and Engagement — Review posts across Embassy Kampala's Facebook and X pages beginning with the period surrounding Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) to determine whether current negative sentiment is part of a longer-running trend and pinpoint which content types (consular updates, health, Ebola messaging, election-related commentary, high-level visits, etc.) drive the most engagement or backlash. Classify engagement by likely audience origin. Map Audience Trends — Assess follower growth and demographics to identify underserved audiences and recommendations on how to reach them. Investigate Facebook Audience Sentiment Drivers — Conduct a focused examination of the Embassy's Facebook audience to disentangle negative reactions, identifying recurring grievance themes and any signs of coordinated or inauthentic activity, including activity suspected to be originating or amplified by foreign, adversarial actors.
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	Compare Platform Dynamics — Produce a short comparative snapshot of how Facebook and X audiences differ in tone, demographics, and content preferences. Assess ""Trade not Aid"" Messaging Reception — Isolate posts and engagement related to U.S. economic diplomacy, trade promotion, investment announcements, and overall ""Trade not Aid"" messaging, including the Boeing case study noted above, amongst others — suggesting that high-visibility commercial announcements can simultaneously energize both supportive and critical audiences and role that platform choice may shape the intensity of that response. Analyze sentiment and engagement patterns to determine: Whether audiences respond more favorably to trade/investment-focused content compared to traditional aid-and-assistance messaging; Which economic themes (e.g., private-sector partnerships, market access, specific trade deals or delegations) generate the most positive engagement versus skepticism or backlash; Whether economic messaging is being overshadowed by, or is helping to counterbalance negative sentiment; Recommendations for how PDS can better position its content to build durable, goodwill with Ugandan audiences across all identified segments, in a manner consistent with our economic diplomacy priorities. Map Thematic Performance Across Platforms — Compare engagement and sentiment across the Embassy's core messaging pillars — including economic diplomacy, health, politics, alumni, refugee issues, education programming, and sports diplomacy — to determine which themes resonate most strongly on Facebook vs. X. Identify: Which themes consistently outperform others in reach, engagement, and positive sentiment on each platform; Whether certain themes (e.g., sports diplomacy) serve as effective ""bridge"" content that offsets negative sentiment tied to political or health-related topics; Practical recommendations for platform-specific content allocation across themes going forward. Map Influencers and Amplifiers — Identify Ugandan public figures, journalists, or pages that regularly engage with the Embassy's content, positively or negatively, and recommend who the Embassy should engage with, while flagging any accounts suspected of being paid or inauthentic amplifiers linked to, or amplifying for example China-aligned narratives leading to false narratives. Conduct a Light Peer Embassy Scan — Briefly compare how one or two peer U.S. embassies in East Africa face similar negative sentiment challenges. Develop Practical Tools for Sustained Use — Create a reusable sentiment tracking template/dashboard and a keyword/theme glossary that PDS staff can maintain going forward to monitor sentiment and catch early warning signs.
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	Deliver Strategic Recommendations — Translate all findings into suggested practical guidance on content strategy, messaging, and trust-rebuilding tactics tailored to each audience segment. This is a hands-on opportunity for students to apply real analytical skills to a live diplomatic challenge, with direct visibility into how their work shapes an Embassy's public messaging strategy. PDS will provide platform data access and Embassy context, and the Embassy Spokesperson will meet with the team monthly to guide the project. Final Deliverables: A written analytical report, no more than 10 pages, covering sentiment/engagement findings, the Facebook and X negative-sentiment investigation (separated by core messaging pillars, platform comparison, influencer mapping, and strategic recommendations). A comparative historical sentiment analysis beginning with the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) period, identifying the underlying drivers ("the why") of negative sentiment and concrete recommendations for shifting the sentiment needle over time. A dedicated sub-section within the written analytical report assessing "Trade not Aid" and broader economic-diplomacy messaging performance, including the Boeing sentiment case study, with recommendations for optimizing future economic content. A thematic performance matrix/scorecard comparing engagement and sentiment across core messaging pillars by platform, showing at a glance which themes perform best with which audiences. A slide deck for briefing Embassy leadership. An Executive One-Pager distilling the top 3–5 findings and recommendations for quick review by the Embassy leadership. A reusable sentiment tracking template/dashboard and accompanying keyword/theme glossary. A draft content calendar, message-testing framework, and crisis/rapid-response messaging guide.
Final Product Format	Final Deliverables: A written analytical report, no more than 10 pages, covering sentiment/engagement findings, the Facebook and X negative-sentiment investigation (separated by core messaging pillars, platform comparison, influencer mapping, and strategic recommendations). A comparative historical sentiment analysis beginning with the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) period, identifying the underlying drivers ("the why") of negative sentiment and concrete recommendations for shifting the sentiment needle over time.

	A dedicated sub-section within the written analytical report assessing ""Trade not Aid"" and broader economic-diplomacy messaging performance, including the Boeing sentiment case study, with recommendations for optimizing future economic content. A thematic performance matrix/scorecard comparing engagement and sentiment across core messaging pillars by platform, showing at a glance which themes perform best with which audiences. A slide deck for briefing Embassy leadership. An Executive One-Pager distilling the top 3–5 findings and recommendations for quick review by the Embassy leadership. A reusable sentiment tracking template/dashboard and accompanying keyword/theme glossary. A draft content calendar, message-testing framework, and crisis/rapid-response messaging guide.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	661
Project Name	AI Research Tools and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP)
Office	Embassy Nicosia Public Diplomacy and Political-Economic Sections
Embassy	Cyprus
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	The Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP) is a bicommunal body established in 1981 by the leaders of the Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) communities, with the participation of the United Nations. The CMP's goal is to recover, identify, and return to their families the remains of an agreed list of 2,002 individuals (1,510 Greek Cypriots and 492 Turkish Cypriots) reported missing during the periods of intercommunal violence of 1963–1964 and fighting in 1974, as well as during the intervening periods. The CMP does not attempt to establish the cause of death or attribute responsibility for the death of missing persons. Its objective is to bring closure to affected families through the return of the remains of their missing relatives. To date, the Committee has identified 1,069 victims, including two of five missing U.S. citizens. The CMP remains dedicated to its mission decades after the tragic events of 1963-1964 and 1974, but it faces challenges advancing its work as memories fade and the physical environment changes. New potential forensic methods, namely AI analysis of archives to identify patterns and uncover new information or clues to help locate the remains of the missing, could assist their efforts. The Diplomacy Lab project ""AI Research Tools and the Committee for Missing Persons in Cyprus"" would create a concept paper that lays out a framework for using AI to uncover information helpful to the CMP's work. Students would look for analogous efforts conducted by multilateral or national entities to examine cases in other countries that have established committees with a similar mission. The concept paper should report on tools being used to aid research in archives with documents of a similar nature. Students would also study advanced techniques for using AI to extract information from large textual databases, including those explored in various humanities and social science databases and government archives, in an effort to identify new tools. The concept paper should make recommendations about AI tools based on affordability, protection of sensitive data, and language options. It could also, depending on students' disciplinary focus, include an examination and recommendation of how AI can assist with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and tagging, identifying patterns and reconstructing events, corroborating testimonies, finding previously unknown links, mapping relationships, grouping documents, assembling documents related to individuals or families, and other pattern-based means of discovering information that can potentially provide new leads. Two potential projects have emerged in discussions with experts. One would be a "lessons learned" paper drawn from studying similar efforts in other cases. The other would be a report on the rapidly evolving AI toolkit that could assist the CMP's work. The nature of the project would depend on the discipline of the group, whether it consists of humanities and social science scholars in the first case or is led by data scientists in the second. Format of the Final Project:

	Concept paper for identifying appropriate AI tools and using AI to identify patterns and reconstruct events in CMP archives. The framework would be executed by CMP staff after sufficient documents have been digitized. Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest: Anthropology, Archeology, Data Science, Forensics, International Relations, Library Science (Archivists), Peace Studies Comments: The project would benefit from the input of an archivist, if available, to provide recommendations on best practices and on archiving techniques most useful for use of AI tools. More information on the CMP is available at its website: https://www.cmp-cyprus.org/.
Final Product Format	Concept paper for identifying appropriate AI tools and using AI to identify patterns and reconstruct events in CMP archives. The framework would be executed by CMP staff after sufficient documents have been digitized.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Anthropology</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	662
Project Name	Mapping Critical Mineral Supply Chains in Niger for U.S. Commercial Engagement
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Niger
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	This Diplomacy Lab project tasks a student research team with producing a comprehensive commercial playbook and risk analysis to facilitate U.S. private sector investment across Niger's entire extractive industries sector—targeting critical minerals (uranium, lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements) as well as hydrocarbons (crude oil and natural gas). As global energy security and supply chain resilience remain top U.S. priorities, positioning American enterprise in Niger's extractives sector is vital for long-term strategic engagement. The student research team will examine pathways for U.S. firms to navigate Niger's post-coup regulatory environment, mitigate geopolitical competition, and integrate local supply chain ecosystems. By applying commercial diplomacy concepts, the study will analyze financial instruments (DFC/EXIM), ESG compliance frameworks, and local infrastructure constraints (e.g., export pipelines and processing nodes)—offering actionable policy and commercial recommendations for U.S. baseline entry.
Final Product Format	Executive Summary: A 2-page synthesis detailing key findings, critical supply chain and pipeline bottlenecks, and primary entry opportunities for U.S. energy and mining entities. Resource & Mapping Analysis: A detailed assessment of active reserves (e.g., uranium, crude oil export infrastructure) and undeveloped strategic deposits (lithium, cobalt, rare earths, natural gas reserves), including geospatial mapping. Regulatory & Political Risk Assessment: An evaluation of Nigerien extractives and petroleum codes, ESG compliance, post-coup operational conditions, and foreign geopolitical footprints. Commercial Strategy & Financing Options: Actionable pathways for U.S. corporate entry, leveraging federal toolkits (DFC project finance, EXIM Bank guarantees) and local business channels (e.g., CCIN). Local Workforce Alignment: Framework for engaging English Access and exchange program alumni as a talent pipeline calibrated to U.S. technical English and commercial standards for potential U.S. extractive operators. Commercial Advocacy & Trust-Building: Strategy for utilizing local business leadership networks to establish an American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) channel in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Niger (CCIN) to advocate for the American economic model and ethical ESG practices. Strategic Narrative: Messaging guidelines to highlight the U.S. value proposition of market ethics, local employment, and transparent economic partnership as the alternative to state-led foreign competition in the region.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Energy Security</i>
Additional Information	Key Research Objectives & Scope Resource & Reserve Mapping: Evaluate Niger's strategic mineral asset base, focusing on existing uranium output alongside emerging lithium, cobalt, and rare earth element deposits. Commercial Entry & Risk Mitigation: Formulate strategy blueprints for U.S. corporate risk-hedging against regional instability, state-backed foreign competition, and legal/regulatory shifts in Niger's mining sector. ESG & Supply Chain Integration: Define localized Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria and technical training pathways required to align Nigerien suppliers and workforces with U.S. corporate standards. Institutional Trade & Investment Channels: Outline mechanisms to utilize a foreign-focused American

	Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) channel and domestic private sector partners (such as the Niger Chamber of Commerce and Industry - CCIN) to advocate for U.S. business access.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	663
Project Name	Analyzing National Clout through Public Engagement Platforms
Office	Office of American Spaces and Educational Advising
Bureau	Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Project Description	The U.S. Department of State's Office of American Spaces and Educational Advising seeks a Diplomacy Lab team with expertise in public diplomacy, nation branding, and data science to assess the global reach and influence of American Spaces (U.S. government-sponsored public engagement platforms), relative to similar platforms sponsored by China, Iran, and Russia. As competitor nations expand initiatives such as Confucius Institutes and Russia Houses, the Department seeks to better understand the relationship between physical/digital public engagement presence and national influence. This project will help the Department analyze how a nation's public engagement platforms reflect, project, and reinforce its broader geopolitical standing. The selected team will design an adaptable, research-driven methodology for ongoing analysis of national influence and reputational clout in relation to government-sponsored public engagement platforms. The resulting framework will give the Department a sustainable, repeatable tool to proactively identify emerging areas of strategic competition and respond with targeted, meaningful engagement with publics around the world. This project presents students a unique opportunity to shape how the U.S. government allocates public diplomacy resources, ensuring programs remain relevant, effective, and responsive in a rapidly evolving global information environment.
Final Product Format	The Diplomacy Lab team will develop a tool—such as an algorithm, predictive model or scoring framework— to support ongoing analysis of national influence in relation to government-sponsored public engagement platforms. This work should leverage open-source intelligence and AI-enabled methods to systematically gather, process, and analyze relevant data across data and platform types. In addition, we welcome the team's expertise in designing a complementary visualization resource—such as a map, dashboard, or other dynamic display—that clearly illustrates areas of geographic and thematic overlap, emerging influence, and competitive positioning among the platforms studied. Together, these deliverables will give the Department a practical, decision-ready tool: one that supports data-driven prioritization of public diplomacy resources and enables more strategic, targeted engagement in regions and sectors where our efforts and resources are most needed.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	American Spaces (https://americanspaces.state.gov/) Confucius Institutes (https://ci.cn/en/qqwl) China Cultural Centers (https://en.chinaculture.org/50011363/ccs) Luban Workshops (https://lubanworkshop.ceaie.edu.cn/) Iran Cultural Centers (https://en.icro.ir/) Russian Houses (https://rs.gov.ru/en/contacts/russian-houses-abroad/represents-with-map/) Russian Centers (https://russkiymir.ru/en/rucenter/what-is.php)

Suggested Academic Level	Any
Project ID	664
Project Name	From Seabed to Strategy: Assessing the Research Base for Deep-Sea Mining
Office	Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Hub
Embassy	Fiji
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Deep-sea mining has emerged as a strategic priority for the United States and Pacific Island governments alike, driven by growing demand for critical minerals and the recognition that responsible seabed development requires a rigorous scientific foundation. President Trump's Executive Order 14285: Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources establishes the United States as a global leader in responsible seabed mineral exploration and extraction, while emphasizing environmental stewardship and transparency standards both within and beyond national jurisdiction. The United States has translated this priority into concrete partnerships across the Pacific, including cooperation with the Cook Islands to support research informing seabed exploration within its exclusive economic zone and with Tonga to advance marine scientific research guided by rigorous science and respect for cultural traditions. Yet despite this momentum, Pacific Island governments continue to face significant challenges in accessing, synthesizing, and applying the scientific research needed to make informed decisions about seabed mineral development within their own waters. This project will collect and systematically review existing research on deep-sea mining—spanning environmental impact studies, geological surveys, technological assessments, and governance frameworks—with particular attention to research relevant to Pacific Island countries’ exclusive economic zones. Drawing on ongoing initiatives such as NOAA's deep-sea research expeditions in the Cook Islands, the project will map what is currently known and by whom, identifying where research is robust, where it is fragmented, and where critical knowledge gaps leave Pacific Island governments without the scientific basis needed for sound policy decisions. The final deliverable will provide a prioritized analysis of these research gaps, offering Pacific Island governments and their partners a clear roadmap for where future scientific investment and capacity-building efforts should be directed to support transparent, evidence-based seabed minerals management.
Final Product Format	Roughly 20-page academic literature review of existing research on deep-sea mining, including analysis of gaps. 2-page executive summary of literature review alongside prioritized gaps in research. Capstone presentation on the findings.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Energy Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Oceans</i>
Additional Information	Other potential academic areas: East Asian and Pacific Studies, Mining/Minerals, Science and Technology, Environmental Studies. NOAA Okeanos Explorer recently completed a trip to the Cook Islands and issued a livestream of the exploration. The U.S. government also had a notice of funding opportunity for supporting Pacific Island countries mapping of seabed mineral resources. These would be good initial items for familiarization.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	665
Project Name	Uncharted Waters: Mapping Authority Gaps in Pacific Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Enforcement
Office	Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Hub
Embassy	Fiji
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the most persistent transnational threats facing the Pacific Islands region, undermining food security, economic development, and the rule of law across a region that is one of the most economically and nutritionally dependent on fishing. IUU fishing is frequently linked to broader illicit activity—including human trafficking and drug smuggling—affecting Pacific Island countries that lack the surveillance assets and law enforcement capacity to police their vast exclusive economic zones. The United States has identified countering IUU fishing as a strategic priority in the Pacific, citing credible reports of distant-water fleets, including Chinese-flagged vessels, violating the sovereignty and fishing laws of Pacific Island states. This project will assess the current landscape of authorities and responsibilities within Pacific Island governments as well as bilateral agreements, such as shiprider agreements, the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, and intergovernmental regional fisheries management organizations that are the backbone of countering IUU fishing in the Pacific. The project will assess the impact of IUU fishing on a range of Pacific Island countries based on tuna migratory patterns and fishing license fees received by Pacific Island governments. The project will also examine how individual Pacific Island governments are organized to combat IUU fishing, mapping which national ministries, fisheries authorities, coast guards, and maritime police forces hold legal jurisdiction over surveillance, boarding, inspection, and prosecution within their exclusive economic zones. This includes identifying where national legal frameworks may be outdated, ambiguous, or insufficiently resourced to support enforcement. The project will also examine where overlapping or unclear mandates between fisheries ministries and maritime security agencies create seams that IUU operators can exploit, and finally, how many IUU fishing cases are successfully brought to prosecution. The assessment will also consider the extent to which Pacific Island states rely on regional bodies, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), to supplement domestic capacity, and how U.S. assistance can be designed to reinforce, rather than substitute for, host-nation authorities. By clarifying where domestic legal authority, institutional capacity, and enforcement responsibility fall across the region, the project aims to produce actionable recommendations for strengthening Pacific Island governments' own ability to counter IUU fishing.
Final Product Format	2-3 page high level summaries of IUU fishing problem, relevant national authorities, prosecution rates, and gaps in enforcement for each Pacific Island country (negotiable as some smaller countries may not be high priority or significantly different authorities for countries in free association with the United States or New Zealand).
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Oceans</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Law</i>
Additional Information	Marine biology and law enforcement are also relevant academic areas. There is also a very strong and relevant nexus to combatting drug trafficking in the Pacific Islands.

	The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is the main regional body that covers IUU fishing but the Pacific Community (SPC) covers IUU fishing at the near-shore. The focus of this project is off-shore but may be useful context to explore what SPC contextualizes as well as FFA. We will likely need to collaborate with other U.S. embassies in the region to get some of the data necessary for the project but that is also a great opportunity for the students.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	666
Project Name	China's Uncrewed Systems Ecosystem (land, sea, and air) and Counter-Uncrewed Systems Capabilities
Office	Regional Security Office
Bureau	Diplomatic Security (DS)
Project Description	This paper will provide U.S. Mission China with an open-source-based, unclassified assessment of China's Uncrewed Systems (UxS) industry and counter-UxS ecosystem — covering commercial drone and other land and sea uncrewed systems production and exports, government and military-affiliated UxS/C-UxS programs, and the legal and regulatory frameworks governing both. The goal is to inform Mission understanding of China's dual-use UxS economy, its global export footprint, and its domestic regulatory posture toward UxS proliferation and counter-UxS technology. The second portion of the paper should be focused on China's law enforcement use of UxS systems as well as China law enforcement use of C-UxS systems, so that we can gain insights as to emerging technologies is being used in China's law enforcement operations.
Final Product Format	Research paper
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Additional Information	How do Chinese law enforcement agencies (e.g., Ministry of Public Security, provincial/local police, People's Armed Police) use UxS for domestic operations (surveillance, crowd monitoring, traffic enforcement, border/coastal patrol, search and rescue)? What types of UxS platforms (commercial off-the-shelf, modified UxS, purpose-built) are fielded by Chinese law enforcement, and which manufacturers supply them? Are UxS integrated with other surveillance systems (e.g., facial recognition, license plate readers, "Skynet"/"Sharp Eyes" programs) for law enforcement purposes? How has Chinese law enforcement used UxS during major public events (e.g., Olympics, Party Congresses, large public gatherings) for security and crowd control? Are there documented human rights or civil liberties concerns associated with Chinese law enforcement UxS use (e.g., in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, or other regions of heightened security focus)? To what extent do Chinese law enforcement agencies coordinate with military or state security services in UxS-derived intelligence sharing? Law Enforcement Counter-UxS Capabilities: What C-UxS detection, tracking, and identification capabilities do Chinese law enforcement agencies possess (as distinct from military C-UxS systems)? What non-kinetic (jamming, spoofing, net capture) and kinetic mitigation tools are available to Chinese police versus military/paramilitary units? Which agencies hold legal authority to detect, track, and interdict unauthorized UxS in China (e.g., Ministry of Public Security vs. PLA vs. Civil Aviation Administration of China)? Has China established "no-fly zones" enforced by law enforcement around sensitive sites (government buildings, airports, Party facilities, diplomatic compounds), and how are violations penalized? What forensic exploitation capability do Chinese law enforcement agencies have for recovered UxS (digital forensics, component analysis)? Has Chinese law enforcement publicized any C-UxS successes (e.g., arrests of UxS operators, disruption of smuggling via drone, prevention of attacks) that offer insight into operational capability and legal process? How does China's approach to law enforcement C-UxS authority and public education (e.g., public awareness campaigns on drone laws) compare with international practice?
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	667
Project Name	China and Virtual Private Networks (VPN).
Office	Regional Security Office
Embassy	
Bureau	Diplomatic Security (DS)
Project Description	How has China's legal and regulatory framework for cybersecurity evolved to restrict VPN use, and how consistently has that framework been enforced in terms of prosecutions, penalties, and fines? Which VPN providers are legally authorized in China? What is required of a VPN provider to be granted authority to legally operate in China?
Final Product Format	Research paper
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	668
Project Name	Political Risk and Evolving Electoral Geography: Modeling Angola's 2027 General Elections and the Future of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership
Office	POL-ECON
Embassy	Angola
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	This Diplomacy Lab project will engage a university research team to perform a political risk assessment and electoral modeling analysis ahead of Angola's 2027 election cycle. Student researchers will analyze the 2025 electoral law reforms, voter registration requirements, new legislation on ""fake news"" and NGOs, and other developments to model how these structural shifts could impact electoral dynamics and social stability. The project will assess youth voter mobilization, evaluating potential triggers for civil unrest, and identifying key post-election transition risks that could impact U.S. investment and bilateral cooperation. Ultimately, the academic team will deliver a structured briefing and a risk-monitoring toolkit to guide Embassy Luanda and the State Department in securing and advancing critical U.S. interests during this pivotal democratic transition. Background: Under President João Lourenço, since 2017 Angola has embarked on a geopolitical realignment away from traditional Cold War allies to embrace an expanding strategic partnership with the United States. Backed by over \$5 billion in U.S. public and private investment, this relationship is anchored by the flagship Lobito Corridor rail project, massive solar energy developments, and robust security, aviation, and migration cooperation. The durability of this strategic pivot faces a critical test in the August 2027 national elections, where President Lourenço is constitutionally barred from seeking a third term, initiating a high-stakes transition of power within the MPLA, which has ruled Angola since independence. To navigate this shifting terrain, the ruling party implemented a variety of structural reforms, including the August 2025 General Electoral Law amendments and a major political-administrative division that doubled the country's municipalities to 325 and created three new provinces. Critics suggest these reforms intended to reinforce the MPLA's electoral majority following a disputed 2022 election that saw the ruling party win only 52% of the vote amid historically low turnout. Ahead of 2027 elections, both the MPLA and opposition parties are more divided than in 2022, increasing the potential for political risk.
Final Product Format	Presentation of a research paper. Length and format negotiable.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Democracy & Human Rights</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Civil Society</i>
Additional Information	Academic freedom and press freedom are limited in Angola, and civil society is increasingly restricted. We hope to leverage a university team's network to gain access and insight otherwise difficult to come by for an Embassy team.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	669
Project Name	Predictive Modeling and Tourism Trend Mapping for U.S. Citizens in the Kingdom of Denmark
Office	CONS
Embassy	Denmark
Bureau	Consular Affairs (CA)
Project Description	This project will combine tourism pattern mapping with predictive modeling to support ACS crisis readiness and outreach planning across Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. The project is comprised of two key components. The first focuses on mapping current tourist trends for U.S.-citizen distribution during traditional seasonal tourism surges. University teams will analyze patterns such as tourist peak seasons, cruise passenger flows, and major event spikes including Roskilde Festival, cruise-season dynamics, international organization-related events (UN, EU among others), Christmas holiday market tourism, and natural phenomena such as eclipses, meteor-shower, or northern lights tourism. The resulting analysis will help ACS anticipate where U.S. citizens are most likely to visit and gather during peak periods, improving planning for Citizen Liaison Volunteer (CLV) engagement, targeted outreach, and crisis messaging. The second component expands analysis to include emerging tourism areas across Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. Researchers will examine risk patterns including adventure tourism hotspots, cruise-ship disembarkation points, iceberg-season travel, helicopter-only village access points, and areas with limited medical care. Teams will move beyond existing travel flows to develop predictive models showing where tourism is likely to grow over the next 10 years. This analysis will strengthen ACS's ability to plan outreach trips, engage CLVs effectively, and tailor consular communications such as STEP and WhatsApp channel broadcasts. The overall project will significantly enhance Mission Denmark's capacity to predict, visualize, and prepare for U.S.-citizen presence throughout the kingdom during periods of elevated tourism or increased risk.
Final Product Format	(1) Analysis of current tourism trends of U.S. travelers in Denmark and how those trends are changing; (2) a heat map showing high-traffic tourism locations during seasonal surges, paired with risk-factor data for crisis preparedness. (3) Predictive map of likely tourist growth over the next 10 years in Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands (4) Presentation of findings and methodology.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	Tourism from the United States to the Kingdom of Denmark is increasing year-over-year. Mapping, predicting, and anticipating this growth is crucial to the successful operation of the American Citizens Services section.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	670
Project Name	Beyond Buenos Aires: Locating and Serving Americans Across Argentina
Office	American Citizen Services
Embassy	Argentina
Bureau	Consular Affairs (CA)
Project Description	U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires is the only post in Argentina where U.S. citizens can access consular services; however, American citizens live throughout Argentina, a country approximately one-third the size of the continental United States. The discrepancy between where American citizens are located and where consular services are available creates real risks. During emergencies, the Embassy's ability to locate, communicate with, and assist U.S. citizens depends on having a real understanding of where those citizens are. U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires needs an evidence-based picture of the American citizen community in the country to allocate outreach resources effectively. The goal of this project is to utilize geospatial and data science methods to turn available data into actionable insights, potentially including maps or dashboards which identify population clusters, underserved or high-risk regions, and gaps in current outreach and communication channels. The Embassy can use this information to improve outreach campaigns and allocate limited consular resources across Argentina more effectively. This project offers students the opportunity to apply their technical skills to real-world foreign policy, collaborating with the U.S. government to shape how services reach American citizens across a large and underserved country.
Final Product Format	We would like maps and dashboards that we could use to locate American Citizens in Argentina.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Geography</i>
Additional Information	Ideally, this project could be carried out by a data science department.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	671
Project Name	Who Shapes the Conversation? Mapping Trinidad and Tobago's Foreign Policy Information Environment
Office	U.S. Embassy Port of Spain, Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Trinidad & Tobago
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	Trinidad and Tobago has a diverse and highly connected media environment. Traditional news organizations, digital outlets, social media personalities, political figures, civil society groups, and foreign governments all contribute to public discussion of international affairs. For U.S. public diplomacy practitioners, understanding how foreign policy information reaches local audiences, which voices carry influence, and which narratives gain traction is important for designing more effective engagement. U.S. Embassy Port of Spain seeks a Diplomacy Lab team to develop a systematic assessment of this information environment using publicly available information. Students would map influential media outlets, commentators, digital platforms, and other relevant actors; examine how selected foreign governments and international actors communicate with Trinidad and Tobago audiences; identify recurring themes and narratives; and analyze how foreign policy messaging moves from official channels into domestic media and online discussion. The project should focus on patterns, networks, audiences, and communications strategies rather than individual political viewpoints. The goal is to give Embassy Port of Spain a clearer picture of the information environment and practical recommendations for where, how, and with whom the United States can communicate most effectively.
Final Product Format	A PowerPoint presentation on the method and results of the study, and a 1-3 page executive memo on the results.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	672
Project Name	Measuring America's Standing: A Social Media and Digital Sentiment Analysis of Public Opinion in Vanuatu
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Vanuatu has virtually no domestically focused public opinion research, leaving a gap in measuring ni-Vanuatu sentiment toward the United States relative to other countries. This gap makes it difficult to track shifts in local sentiment over time. Establishing this baseline data is especially important in the first years following the establishment of U.S. Embassy Port Vila in 2024. Traditional survey-based polling in Vanuatu is logistically difficult and likely out of the scope of a semester-long academic project. However, Facebook remains the dominant platform through which ni-Vanuatu audiences consume news and engage in public discourse, creating a rich, passively observable dataset that can offer meaningful insight into local sentiment without requiring direct human-subject data collection. This project will develop and apply a digital sentiment analysis methodology to assess public attitudes toward the United States, its programs, and its cooperation with Vanuatu, relative to other external actors active in the region. Students will identify publicly available online sources — including public Facebook pages, groups, and posts from Vanuatu-based media outlets, government accounts, and civil society organizations, as well as any other accessible digital platforms relevant to the local information environment — and apply text and sentiment analysis techniques to gauge tone, engagement, and thematic trends in how the United States and its initiatives are discussed. The project should be retroactive to 2024 and identify recurring narratives, measure relative visibility and sentiment toward U.S.-related content compared to that of other external actors, and account for limitations inherent in analyzing a small, non-representative online population relative to Vanuatu's broader population. Students should also propose a repeatable methodology and set of indicators that U.S. Embassy Vanuatu can track on an ongoing basis to observe sentiment trends over time, without the cost or logistical burden of fielded survey research. Because this project relies exclusively on publicly available online content rather than direct engagement with human subjects, it is expected to fall outside the scope of Institutional Review Board (IRB) review; however, the awarded university should confirm this determination with its own IRB prior to beginning work.
Final Product Format	A 3-5 page written report presenting sentiment analysis findings, including thematic trends, and tone of online discourse regarding the United States compared to other active in Vanuatu. A documented, repeatable methodology and indicator set that PAS can use to monitor online sentiment trends on an ongoing basis.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Sociology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	673
Project Name	Cashing In on Citizenship: Assessing the Sustainability of Vanuatu's Problem-Ridden Citizenship by Investment Program
Office	United States of America Embassy Port Vila Vanuatu
Embassy	
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Vanuatu's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program allows foreign nationals to obtain citizenship in exchange for a financial contribution, without requiring residency. CBI has grown from a modest revenue stream into one of the government's largest sources of income. Vanuatu passports have been blacklisted or subject to increasing visa restrictions because of concerns over weak vetting, high risk applicant, lack of information sharing, and corruption. This rapid reliance on a single, externally-driven revenue source raises concerns about fiscal sustainability, economic diversification, and long-term national resilience—particularly as international scrutiny of investment migration programs increases and as other jurisdictions (such as several Caribbean nations, Malta, and others) navigate similar dynamics with their own CBI programs. This project will trace the origins and evolution of Vanuatu's CBI program, its economic and social impacts domestically, and how it benchmark it against CBI programs in other countries in terms of risk exposure. Students will explore what could happen to Vanuatu's fiscal position and development trajectory if the program were significantly curtailed or discontinued—whether due to external pressure, market saturation, or policy reversal—and will identify and assess alternative or supplementary revenue streams the government could pursue to build a more diversified and resilient economic base. The project offers an opportunity to engage with issues at the intersection of international political economy, migration policy, and small-state development strategy, with direct relevance to ongoing policy discussions in Vanuatu and the broader Pacific region.
Final Product Format	3-4 page report
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	674
Project Name	Blue Guardianship: Securing Vanuatu's Maritime Revenue in a Vast and Vulnerable EEZ
Office	United States of America Port Vila Vanuatu
Embassy	
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Vanuatu is a small Pacific Island archipelago nation with a vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) spanning an area more than 60 times its landmass. Fisheries revenue is a key income generator, from license fees, access agreements, and sustainable exploitation of tuna and other stocks—represents a critical and growing source of national income, alongside other maritime-linked revenue streams such as vessel registry fees and potential future interest in seabed resources. However, the size of Vanuatu's EEZ far outstrips its limited capacity to enforce naval and law enforcement, making it particularly vulnerable to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, especially from distant-water fleets. Left unaddressed, this enforcement gap threatens not only fish stocks and long-term sustainability, but also the government revenue and food security that depend on a well-managed maritime domain. This project will examine the operational and structural challenges Vanuatu faces in policing its EEZ and protecting its maritime revenue base, and will assess the range of partnerships and tools—bilateral, regional, and multilateral—that Vanuatu has used or could pursue to close this gap. This includes shiprider agreements with partners such as the United States, France, and Australia; regional coordination through the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and the Pacific Community; and multinational surveillance initiatives such as the Quad's Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness partnership. This study will evaluate how a combination of maritime domain awareness technology, fisheries compliance training, and regional partnerships can strengthen Vanuatu's sovereign enforcement capacity to protect its maritime revenue streams, and support long-term economic resilience in the broader context of Pacific regional security and blue economy development.
Final Product Format	3-4 page report.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Oceans</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic Sanctions</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	675
Project Name	Open, Secure, and Competitive: A U.S. Digital Technology Model for Zambia
Office	Political and Economic Affairs
Embassy	Zambia
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	Zambia is rapidly expanding digital government, connectivity, cloud and data infrastructure, and emerging technologies, creating long-term choices about the systems that will underpin its digital economy. Chinese firms such as Huawei have been highly competitive in developing markets by offering integrated packages of hardware, software, implementation, maintenance, training, and financing. U.S. firms lead in many individual technologies, but their offerings can be more fragmented and appear more expensive upfront. This project would examine whether a realistic combination of U.S. commercial and open-source technologies could provide Zambia with an affordable, secure, interoperable, and sustainable alternative - and how to demonstrate the comparative advantages of that model in terms that matter to Zambian decision-makers. The student team would develop a practical “minimum viable” U.S./open technology ecosystem for Zambia, assessing where open-source solutions are viable, where proprietary products remain necessary, and how the model compares with integrated vendor offerings on total cost of ownership, cybersecurity, reliability, interoperability, scalability, innovation, local capacity building, and freedom from vendor lock-in. The project would also explore how best to frame the value proposition of a U.S.-aligned stack: not simply as a geopolitical alternative, but as a higher-value model offering greater resilience, transparency, technological choice, access to a broader innovation ecosystem, and potentially lower long-term risk. It would estimate the IT and cybersecurity workforce Zambia would need to operate and secure such systems and identify the skills, financing, procurement, and partnership models required to make the approach commercially realistic. The result would give U.S. policymakers and companies a practical framework for translating American technological strengths into a compelling and competitive digital-development offering for Zambia and other emerging markets.
Final Product Format	The most useful primary deliverable would be a concise presentation, with the goal of presenting the findings to Embassy leadership, Washington policymakers, Zambian counterparts, and potentially U.S. technology firms. A strong 10–15 slide deck should clearly present the recommended U.S./open-source technology model, why it is competitive, where it offers advantages over integrated Chinese vendor solutions, what it would cost, and what workforce and policy conditions are required for implementation. A supporting research paper of approximately 10–15 pages should provide the evidence and analysis behind the presentation, including methodology, assumptions, comparative assessment, and policy implications. Finally, a technical annex should capture the more detailed material—reference architecture, technology and vendor options, cost assumptions, workforce estimates and skills requirements, and other data that would allow practitioners to test or adapt the model. This three-part format would make the work both accessible to senior decision-makers and sufficiently rigorous for technical and policy follow-up.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>

Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	676
Project Name	Spotting Crises Before They Happen: The Catholic Church's Humanitarian Network as an Early Warning System
Office	Political/Economic and Public Diplomacy Sections
Embassy	Holy See
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	The U.S. Embassy to the Holy See seeks a university partner to explore how the Catholic Church's extensive global network—parishes, dioceses, schools, hospitals, and charitable organizations such as Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Relief Services—could serve as an early-warning system and delivery mechanism for humanitarian assistance. With a presence in nearly every country and often functioning at the community level long before, during, and after a crisis, the Church possesses on-the-ground knowledge of emerging food insecurity, displacement, disease outbreaks, and civil unrest that formal diplomatic channels may be slower to detect. This project would task students with researching how the Church's existing reporting structures, clergy networks, and lay volunteer systems have historically identified deteriorating conditions ahead of emergency situations. Students would also produce a mapping exercise identifying where the Catholic Church maintains brick-and-mortar infrastructure—clinics, schools, shelters, and distribution centers—already conducting relief work in regions vulnerable to natural disasters, conflict, or economic collapse. This deliverable would give the Embassy and the Department a practical resource for identifying trusted last-mile partners capable of delivering aid directly to affected populations while minimizing diversion or interference by hostile governments, consistent with the current administration's emphasis on bypassing inefficient intermediaries in favor of direct, accountable assistance channels. The project reflects the Department's growing practice of partnering with organizations like Caritas and Catholic Relief Services on humanitarian responses in Cuba and the Caribbean, and it offers students a chance to apply geographic and data-mapping skills to a diplomatically relevant challenge: strengthening the U.S. government's ability to anticipate and respond to humanitarian disasters through one of the world's most extensive and trusted civil society networks.
Final Product Format	Students will select a specific conflict or disaster-prone region and design a tangible deliverable, such as a report, interactive map, website, or app, that maps the Catholic Church's existing humanitarian infrastructure in that area, including clinics, schools, shelters, and distribution centers. Students will determine the most effective method for compiling and presenting this information. Using this mapping exercise, students will identify critical gaps in current communication and reporting channels and propose concrete recommendations for how the U.S. government can better leverage this existing network to expedite the flow of information on emerging or escalating humanitarian crises. This includes identifying potential points of contact or "reporters" on the ground within the network who could provide real-time updates on looming crises. The goal is to encourage broader awareness of the Church's extensive global network and enhance information sharing and coordination with the Holy See to prevent and respond to humanitarian disasters.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>

Suggested Academic Level	Graduate
Project ID	677
Project Name	Scouting the Field: A New Approach to Identifying Protective Technology Needs
Office	Technical Security Office, Regional Security Office, U.S. Consulate General Jeddah
Embassy	Saudia Arabia
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	Every day a promising piece of technology sits in review, it drifts further from cutting-edge and closer to obsolescence — and the officers and posts who could have used it sooner are the ones who pay for that delay. DS/C/ST has historically struggled to identify emerging and disruptive technologies in time to leverage them, leaving the Division behind the power curve rather than ahead of it. Commercial (COTS) and near-commercial (near-COTS, MOTS, GOTS) products are simply the tools available to close that gap — but only if identified and fielded quickly enough to matter. In practice, technology often outpaces internal process: a new product generation can reach market before an existing model even completes internal cataloging and field approval, leaving posts without a procurable option in the interim. A pipeline that takes nearly as long as the end product's lifecycle risks fielding a product the manufacturer has already moved past by the time it reaches the field. This project asks a deceptively simple question: are our efforts focused on the right technologies and needs from the start, or determined only in hindsight, after the best opportunity to act has already passed? The Division has an existing pipeline for developing and fielding new technology once a need is identified, including the Security Technology Engineering Process (STEP) and idea-intake channels like the Conduit for Innovation (CFI). This project does not presume that pipeline is flawed — it may be functioning exactly as designed. The open question is whether there's a better means for the Division to proactively identify emerging and disruptive technologies and get them to the field sooner, without compromising a solid, reliable vetting process, regardless of what that process looks like. This project should evaluate the full pipeline, from identification through implementation, to determine where the greatest opportunities for improvement exist.
Final Product Format	A written findings report with recommendations, and a final briefing presentation delivered to the officer's chain of advisors and interested stakeholders.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	This project is intended to be evaluated holistically as a single continuous pipeline; if multiple teams are engaged, each should assess the full pipeline independently rather than being divided by stage, since fragmenting the review risks obscuring where the actual gap lies. Background documentation on existing pipeline components — including the Security Technology Engineering Process (STEP) — has been confirmed as releasable for academic use and can be provided directly to the assigned faculty lead early in the semester. This is intended as reference material only, not a starting frame; the goal is to evaluate the full pipeline, not just this single mechanism.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	678
Project Name	Mapping America's Foreign Policy Priorities: A Visualization and Analysis Tool for Unclassified Strategic Plans
Office	Office of Planning and Performance (BP/OPP)
Embassy	
Bureau	Budget and Planning (BP)
Project Description	Every year, the Department produces dozens of Bureau Strategies and Integrated Country Strategies (ICS) — the Department's core mission- and bureau-level strategic planning documents. Each document lays out goals, objectives, overviews, and explicit "linkages" tying that bureau's or mission's work back to the Agency Strategic Plan (ASP), the President's Management Agenda (PMA), regional bureau frameworks, or specific Executive Orders. The unclassified, public-release portions of these documents — Executive Priorities/Chief of Mission Priorities, the Bureau/Mission Strategy Framework, and Goal and Objective overviews and linkages — are posted publicly on State.gov to meet Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) requirements, and are available to students as PDF documents. Despite this transparency mandate, these documents currently exist as static, siloed PDFs. There is no unified way to see, at a glance, how dozens of bureau and mission strategies collectively align with the ASP, PMA priorities, or specific Executive Orders; where thematic overlaps or coordination opportunities exist across bureaus and missions; or how strategic priorities are distributed geographically and functionally across the Department's global footprint. This project asks a Diplomacy Lab student team to build a prototype tool that ingests, structures, and visualizes the unclassified sections of Bureau Strategies and ICS documents posted to State.gov. Students will work from the publicly available PDFs, drawing on the Executive Summary/COM Priorities, Framework, and Goal/Objective overview-and-linkage sections that each document includes in its public-facing version. Suggested student workstreams over the semester: Data collection and schema design (Month 1): Inventory publicly posted Bureau Strategy and ICS PDFs on State.gov; design a simple structured schema (e.g., JSON/CSV) capturing bureau/mission name, goal statements, goal overviews, objective statements, objective overviews, and linkage references (ASP objective, PMA priority, Executive Order, or regional bureau objective). Extraction pipeline (Month 2): Build a lightweight, semi-automated extraction workflow (using large language models or structured PDF parsing) to convert the consistently formatted document sections into the structured dataset — with a human-review step, since accuracy and traceability matter more than full automation. Visualization and analysis prototype (Month 3): Develop an interactive dashboard (e.g., a simple web app, Tableau/Power BI workbook, or Python/React prototype) that lets a user filter and browse goals/objectives by bureau, region, or linked ASP/PMA objective, and surface patterns such as which ASP objectives are most/least referenced Department-wide, or where thematic overlaps exist across bureaus and missions. Findings and recommendations (Month 4): Prepare a short analytic brief highlighting notable patterns, gaps, or coordination opportunities the data reveals, along with recommendations on how such a tool could be maintained or expanded (e.g., ahead of each annual strategy review cycle).

	This is intentionally scoped as a proof-of-concept for a single semester rather than a production system, though it draws inspiration from larger cross-government efforts to structure and visualize strategic plans at scale.
Final Product Format	This project's deliverable is primarily a working software prototype and structured dataset, accompanied by supporting written and oral components: A working prototype tool (interactive dashboard or web application) built from the structured dataset of unclassified strategic plan content The structured dataset itself, documented and reusable Source code and documentation (e.g., a GitHub repository) enabling BP/OPP to maintain or extend the tool A short technical/methods report explaining the extraction approach and data schema A final briefing/presentation to the sponsoring office summarizing findings, patterns identified, and recommendations for future iterations
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Additional Information	BP/OPP welcomes teams with a range of technical backgrounds; strong candidates may come from Computer Science or Information and Communication Technology programs, ideally with some interest or coursework in public policy, international affairs, or data visualization. Suggested starting points for student research: Review examples of unclassified Bureau Strategies and Integrated Country Strategies (ICS) currently posted to State.gov to understand document structure and content. Familiarize with the Department's Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) and the President's Management Agenda (PMA), since these are the primary frameworks that bureau and mission strategies link back to. Review 18 FAM 301.2 for background on the Department's strategic planning requirements and processes. As a point of inspiration (not a template to replicate), students may find it useful to look at how other federal strategy visualization efforts are approaching similar challenges, such as GSA's Office of Government-wide Policy work on unifying federal strategic plan data.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	679
Project Name	Beyond the Textbook: Bringing American Culture to EFL Classrooms
Office	Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Embassy Chisinau
Embassy	Moldova
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	For thousands of students in Moldova, English-language study is confined to boring textbooks that offer little awareness of the people, places, and culture behind the language. While American movies and YouTube might provide some insight into American culture, the pace and complexity of dialogues often surpass the ability of average English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. This project invites multidisciplinary U.S. student teams to close that gap by producing a series of short, high-energy videos merging authentic American settings and native-speaker dialogue. Think trendy teen topics filmed on location in real U.S. shops, campuses, and landmarks paired with eye-catching graphics like speech-bubble captions and embedded vocabulary overlays. These videos will give overseas EFL students ages 8–18 an authentic, engaging window into American life while building their language skills—advancing U.S. public diplomacy goals by fostering positive, people-to-people connections with the next generation of Moldova's youth. This project offers a rare opportunity for students across disciplines to bring their unique skills to a single, tangible product with real-world impact. TESOL education majors will carefully consider vocabulary to craft engaging lessons; communications, media, and journalism students will lead production and multimedia design; theater and performance students will bring dialogue to life as on-camera talent; and international affairs students will ensure the content reflects an authentic, positive portrayal of American values and daily life to impact an overseas audience. Along the way, the team will conduct audience research to understand what resonates with youth abroad, translating those insights into content that is not just instructive, but genuinely fun to watch. The result will be a scalable video series that Embassy Chisinau—and potentially posts worldwide—can use to support English-language education and cultural diplomacy for years to come. We would like to work with two or three university teams in different geographic regions to highlight diverse aspects of U.S. culture. At least one team should be a university located in or near a major U.S. city. Due to Moldova's heavy focus on agriculture, a university with agricultural programs in a rural location would be an ideal second team. Preferably only one university team would be responsible for final video editing to ensure visual cohesion through the series' production.
Final Product Format	50 video dialogues (up to five minutes each) about American life and culture for EFL lessons
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Additional Information	The Public Affairs Section at U.S. Embassy Moldova looks forward to working with you on this project! Driven by a request straight from the Chisinau City Hall to provide English conversation and American cultural videos to 150,000 students in youth centers in the capital region, this project will have an immediate impact. Learning English is increasingly critical for students in Moldova as the nation deepens its political and economic integration with the European Union and looks to expand trade and

	investment opportunities with the United States and other countries. Moldovan students are required to take at least one foreign language and can choose among English, French or German – and English has become the overwhelmingly dominant choice. Statistics show that nearly 90% of primary and secondary students in Moldova study English, representing over 260,000 pupils across the general school system. Providing EFL videos about American culture will not only offer a practical language education, but also provide an authentic view of life in the United States and challenging adversarial propaganda often present in the region.
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	680
Project Name	Anticipating the Next Drone Threat: Mapping the Global Evolution of Terrorist UAS Tactics
Office	Homeland Security and Technical Policy
Bureau	Counterterrorism (CT)
Project Description	Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS, or “drones”) are rapidly transforming the threat landscape and counterterrorism fight. Once constrained by cost and technical expertise, commercially available UAS are now inexpensive, adaptable, and readily accessible to terrorist and other threat actors. Terrorist organizations leverage drones for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; weaponized attacks; propaganda and recruitment—providing terrorists with increased lethality with expanded operational reach. As UAS capabilities evolve, so too do the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) used to employ them. The Counterterrorism Bureau’s Office of Homeland Security and Technical Policy (HSTP) seeks support in illuminating this evolving threat with a comprehensive global assessment of how terrorist groups and interconnected threat actors are incorporating UAS into their planning and operations—and how quickly those TTPs are evolving and spreading across terrorist groups and regions. The goal is not simply to document where drones have been used, but also to identify patterns, indicators, and emerging trends that can help policymakers anticipate what comes next. The resulting analysis will inform U.S. counterterrorism policy, security assistance, and our security posture overseas, while providing insight into how emerging TTPs could migrate to the Western Hemisphere and ultimately threaten the Homeland. Students will have the opportunity to apply open-source research, data analysis, and policy analysis to a dynamic and consequential national security challenge. HSTP will provide a baseline dataset derived from a Department UAS threat-environment survey and, where appropriate, facilitate engagement with U.S. diplomatic posts and other interagency experts. The result will be a globally informed, practitioner-relevant assessment designed to help the Department move from reacting to the UAS threat to disrupting it.
Final Product Format	The project is envisioned as an open-source intelligence-based research effort drawing on existing Department data and, as appropriate, information gathered from U.S. diplomatic posts overseas. The desired final product is a global report that identifies significant terrorist UAS TTPs and trends, assesses how those TTPs are evolving and spreading across regions, and offers recommendations for countermeasures appropriate to different threat environments. The final product should provide policymakers and practitioners with a clear, actionable picture of the global UAS threat and help identify emerging patterns that can inform proactive counterterrorism and Counter-UAS efforts.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Counter Terrorism</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Additional Information	The project is sponsored by the Counterterrorism Bureau’s Office of Homeland Security and Technical Policy (HSTP). HSTP works across the interagency to develop practical, coordinated counterterrorism policies, initiatives, and strategic plans to protect the Homeland and is responsible for the Department’s portfolio on the terrorist use of emerging technologies. The project would directly support HSTP’s efforts to understand and address the rapidly evolving use of UAS by terrorist and other threat actors.

Suggested Academic Level	Any
Project ID	681
Project Name	Designing an early-warning and community response model for New World screwworm in highly marginalized territories
Office	Public Diplomacy, U.S. Embassy Mexico
Embassy	Mexico
Bureau	Public Affairs (PA)
Project Description	The resurgence of the New World screwworm (<i>Cochliomyia hominivorax</i>) represents a critical biosecurity and economic threat to livestock industries, rural livelihoods, public health, and cross-border trade between Mexico and the United States. Remote, smallholder livestock communities are on the front lines of defense yet face severe hurdles: limited veterinary presence, geographical isolation, and low digital connectivity. Using the state of Hidalgo as an applied case study, this project invites students to co-design an inclusive, low-bandwidth early-warning framework that bridges remote agricultural communities with official bilateral surveillance systems. Students will operate at the intersection of veterinary science, spatial analytics, and human-centered communication design. By synthesizing epidemiological guidance, municipal-level socioeconomic data, and territorial access gaps, the team will develop actionable, offline-first tools (such as visual guides, WhatsApp-friendly media, and access vulnerability maps) to help producers detect, report, and prevent infestations rapidly. This project offers U.S. students a unique opportunity to contribute directly to active U.S.–Mexico biosecurity diplomacy, generating open-access deliverables adaptable to vulnerable agricultural corridors across North and Central America.
Final Product Format	A comprehensive, practical digital early-warning & preparedness toolkit comprising: • Spatial vulnerability and access map: A GIS-based interactive or static map overlaying livestock density, transportation networks, digital connectivity, and marginalization indicators against veterinary service hubs to highlight critical intervention zones. • Zero-connectivity community field toolkit: Practical, accessible field assets designed for remote areas without internet coverage (e.g., pocket-sized visual reference guides, printable laminated cards, and simple reporting protocols). • Implementation and adaptation playbook: A brief operational guide detailing maintenance protocols, community rollout strategies, and adaptation models for indigenous languages or adjacent high-risk regions. • Policy and strategy brief (4–6 pages): A concise executive document synthesizing methodology, systemic bottlenecks, design limitations, and bilateral policy recommendations. • Final stakeholder presentation: A 15–20 minute slide deck delivered virtually to UAEH faculty, institutional stakeholders, and animal-health partners.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Global Health</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	This fully virtual collaboration will run for six weeks under the institutional leadership of the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo (UAEH), which will provide territorial datasets, contextual briefings, dedicated mentorship, and regular milestone reviews. Project coordinator Dr. Gabriela Medina Pérez will manage the calendar and facilitate

	communication between the participating student team, institutional partners, and subject-matter experts. Faculty & Expert Advisory Network: • Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science: Dr. José Ignacio Olave Leyva, Dr. Carolina Sosa Gutiérrez, Dr. Nydia Edith Reyes Rodríguez (UAEH). • Agricultural & Forestry Sciences: Dr. Carmen Julia Figueredo Urbina, Dr. Sergio Hernández León (UAEH). External specialists in marginalization and territory • Dr. Patricia Medina Pérez — El Colegio del Estado de Hidalgo. • Dr. Acela Montes de Oca Hernández — Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (UAEMéx.).
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	682
Project Name	Advancing U.S. Public Diplomacy in Panama's Evolving Media Landscape
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Panama
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	Context and Importance: Panama occupies a strategically vital position in the Western Hemisphere, serving as a steadfast U.S. partner in advancing regional security, countering transnational crime, and safeguarding the Panama Canal – a critical artery for global trade and commerce. As the United States works with Panama to resist malign external influences and protect the sovereignty and rule of law that underpin a free and open Western Hemisphere, effective public communication has never been more important. The U.S. Embassy's Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) serves as a critical link in this effort. To fulfill this role effectively, PDS must understand how Panamanians consume news and information in an evolving media environment increasingly shaped by social media, shifting trust in traditional outlets, and active efforts by strategic competitors to shape narratives in the region. Ensuring that accurate, compelling American messaging reaches Panamanian audiences – rather than ceding that space to competing narratives – is essential to advancing U.S. interests and reinforcing the strength of the bilateral relationship. Project Purpose and Scope: This project invites students to examine the modern Panamanian media landscape: how citizens access news, which platforms and voices carry influence, and how social media can be leveraged to advance clear, effective public diplomacy. Findings will directly inform how PDS promotes its programs – including English-language learning, Fulbright, and the International Visitor Leadership Program – along with the activities of the Panama American Center and Colón American Center, ensuring that America's investment in the bilateral relationship is clearly understood and valued by Panamanian audiences and shaping the Ambassador's online engagement with the Panamanian public. The desired outcome is a practical, forward-looking media engagement strategy that PDS can use as a long-term reference tool, strengthening the Embassy's ability to communicate directly and effectively with the Panamanian public. This project offers students a meaningful opportunity to apply research and communication skills to a live public diplomacy challenge with real strategic impact.
Final Product Format	Media strategy
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	Students in the fields of political science and international relations may also be interested in this project.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	683
Project Name	Digital Engagement Strategy for EducationUSA Malaysia
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Malaysia
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Malaysian Gen Z students increasingly make major life decisions, including where to pursue higher education, based on content encountered on TikTok, Instagram, and other short-form digital platforms. EducationUSA Malaysia's current digital footprint does not fully capture this audience, especially in secondary cities where in-person advising resources are limited. This project asks a student team to analyze the current digital landscape for U.S. study-abroad messaging in Malaysia and design a practical content strategy that PDS can implement to expand reach, engagement, and awareness among younger Malaysian audiences. Students will have the opportunity to engage directly with PDS Kuala Lumpur early in the semester to better understand existing digital assets, audience data, and messaging constraints before finalizing their approach.
Final Product Format	A social media content strategy document, including a sample content calendar (4–6 weeks), platform-specific recommendations (TikTok, Instagram, etc.), and 3–5 sample content concepts or mockups.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Marketing</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Additional Information	Preference for teams with experience in social media analytics or content creation for youth audiences. Spanish/Bahasa Malaysia language skills are a plus but not required.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	684
Project Name	Mapping Malaysian Student Mobility Trends
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Malaysia
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	The U.S. faces growing competition from the UK, Australia, Japan, and South Korea for Malaysian students studying abroad. Understanding why Malaysian students choose one destination over another, and how those preferences have shifted over the past decade, is essential for PDS Malaysia to sharpen its EducationUSA outreach and allocate limited advising resources effectively. This project asks a student team to conduct a comparative analysis of enrollment trends, policy environments, and student decision-making factors across competitor destinations, culminating in actionable recommendations for PDS's outreach strategy. Students will work with publicly available enrollment data, academic literature, and (where accessible) PDS-provided context to build a clear, evidence-based picture of the competitive landscape for U.S. higher education recruitment in Malaysia.
Final Product Format	A data-driven report (approximately 10-15 pages) or interactive dashboard comparing enrollment trends over the last 10 years, accompanied by a 2-3 page policy recommendations memo.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Additional Information	Familiarity with data visualization tools (e.g., Tableau, Power BI) is helpful but not required.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	685
Project Name	Public Perceptions of the U.S.-Malaysia Relationship
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Malaysia
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	As the Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) in Malaysia works to strengthen the bilateral relationship across economic, security, and people-to-people dimensions, understanding how different segments of the Malaysian public perceive that relationship is critical to effective strategic communications. Perceptions may vary significantly by age, region, and ethnicity in a country as diverse as Malaysia, and PDS needs a clearer, evidence-based picture of where public opinion is strong, where it is vulnerable, and where messaging gaps exist. This project asks a student team to design and analyze a polling or survey-based study capturing these perceptions and to translate findings into practical messaging recommendations for PDS's strategic communications planning. Students will coordinate with PDS early in the semester to align survey design with current embassy priorities and any existing polling data or constraints.
Final Product Format	A polling/survey-based public opinion report (approximately 15-20 pages) with a concise (2-3 page) set of messaging recommendations for PDS strategic communications.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Additional Information	Experience with survey design and quantitative analysis strongly preferred. Access to Malaysian respondent pools may require creative sampling approaches (e.g., online panels).
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	686
Project Name	Economic Diplomacy Messaging: U.S. Investment and Trade
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Malaysia
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	"The U.S.-Malaysia economic relationship spans semiconductor supply chains, digital economy partnerships, and broader trade and investment ties, and represents one of the most consequential dimensions of the bilateral relationship, yet it is not always well understood by Malaysian business and government audiences. The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) Malaysia needs a clear, compelling way to communicate the mutual benefits of this relationship to key stakeholders who influence investment decisions and policy. This project asks a student team to identify priority audiences within the Malaysian business and government community and develop a messaging guide that translates complex economic partnerships into clear, persuasive narratives. Students will consult with PDS and, where possible, embassy economic officers early in the semester to ensure the messaging guide reflects current priorities and real stakeholder dynamics."
Final Product Format	A messaging guide (10-15 pages) including stakeholder mapping and 3-5 sample messaging products (e.g., talking points, one-pagers) for economic diplomacy outreach.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Additional Information	Familiarity with semiconductor/tech supply chain issues or U.S.-ASEAN trade policy is a plus.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	687
Project Name	Measuring China's Subnational Influence on Ethiopia in 2025
Office	Political-Economic Unit
Embassy	Ethiopia
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	Ethiopia, the seat of the African Union and the Horn of Africa's most populous nation, occupies a pivotal position in U.S. strategic calculus for regional stability, counterterrorism, and great-power competition. But its federal structure—comprising Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and other regional states with substantial autonomy—creates a governance landscape where PRC influence often operates below the radar of federal-level bilateral tracking. While Washington's attention typically centers on Addis Ababa's national government, Chinese provincial governments, state-owned enterprises, and party organs have cultivated parallel relationships with regional administrations, local universities, and municipal officials through infrastructure contracts, sister-city agreements, scholarship pipelines, and Confucius Institute placements. This matters to U.S. interests because such subnational inroads can shape regional political alignments, security postures, and economic dependencies in ways that federal-level diplomacy may not capture or counter. The Diplomacy Lab team(s) can help Embassy Addis Ababa's regional reporting and commercial diplomacy teams to systematically identify and combat China's entrenchment.
Final Product Format	An open source-based paper that tracks China's activities in Ethiopia at the regional and/or major city (Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Mekelle, etc.) levels over the year 2025 to identify economic activities (e.g., economic MOUs, trade delegations, foreign direct investment plans), academic ties (e.g., academic MOUs, university exchanges), media agreements (exchanges between journalists or local media organizations), cultural exchanges (e.g., "sister city" agreements, gifts of art, sports exhibitions), and official or political party visits. Ideally, the product would include a one-page executive summary and an accompanying "heat map" to visualize China's activities. The map and additional analysis will inform a U.S. strategy for safeguarding subnational regions from China's malign behavior.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	688
Project Name	AI-Enabled Foreign Influence: What Should Diplomatic Missions Be Preparing For?
Office	Public Affairs Section
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	Generative AI is rapidly lowering the cost of producing and disseminating convincing, multilingual content, creating new opportunities for foreign actors to deploy manipulative narratives to shape public discourse and influence perceptions of the United States and undermine regional sovereignty in the Indo-Pacific. As these tools become increasingly accessible and embedded across global information ecosystems, state and non-state actors can tailor malign narratives with unprecedented speed, volume, and cultural specificity—allowing them to engage in coercive influence and information manipulation that mirrors local linguistic patterns, exploits existing social divides, and adapts dynamically to real-time events. The sheer scalability of AI-driven content production also enables influence actors to run simultaneous campaigns across multiple platforms, languages, and audience segments, blurring the line between authentic public sentiment and engineered persuasion while complicating detection and timely diplomatic response. This project will ask students to examine how AI is reshaping foreign influence operations directed at the U.S. and its allies, including Japan, using data and situational analysis of synthetic media, automated content generation, and AI-enabled amplification, and by identifying emerging tactics that challenge traditional detection and response methods. Through comparative case studies and open-source research, students will map key trends, develop plausible scenarios, and propose early-warning indicators that can help anticipate potential manipulation efforts. Their assessment will highlight gaps in existing monitoring tools and derive practical, data-driven, actionable options to strengthen Embassy Tokyo’s posture across public diplomacy, media outreach, and whole-of-mission coordination. The project culminates in a concise, operationally useful framework or prototype tool designed to support policymakers in identifying, contextualizing, and responding to AI-enabled coercive influence activity while protecting lawful expression and open information environments in the Indo-Pacific.
Final Product Format	The final product will consist of a concise, mission-ready deliverable package that includes a 10–15 page analytic brief summarizing findings, scenarios, and indicators and a simple framework or prototype assessment tool that shows how policymakers can identify and evaluate AI-enabled influence activity.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	1. NSA / ASD / CISA — Content Credentials: Strengthening Multimedia Integrity in the Generative AI Era (January 2025) PDF: https://media.defense.gov/2025/Jan/29/2003634788/-1/-1/0/CSI-CONTENT-CREDENTIALS.PDF 2. NIST — Reducing Risks Posed by Synthetic Content: An Overview of Technical Approaches to Digital Content Transparency (Nov 2024, updated Apr 2026) https://www.nist.gov/publications/reducing-risks-posed-synthetic-content-overview-technical-approaches-digital-content

	These resources provide U.S. government perspectives to help students orient themselves and begin researching AI-enabled foreign influence. These are some—not all—resources available online for students who want additional background.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	689
Project Name	Multilateral Strategic Stability for the 21st Century
Office	U.S. Mission
Embassy	U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	Senior State Department officials have called for multilateral strategic stability measures that are purpose built for our time—particularly in light of the rapid expansion of China’s nuclear program. The Administration has made it clear that any effective approach to strategic stability must ensure China’s active participation in negotiations.
Final Product Format	A presentation and report
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arms Control/Non-Proliferation</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Additional Information	Key Questions: • Given its long-standing refusal to engage on the topic, what pressures can be brought to bear necessary to have China fulfill its NPT Article VI’s mandate for “good faith” negotiations and effective arms control? • What strategic components should a modern multilateral agreement include and how can it be verified • If it came, what aspects would China be interested in bringing to the negotiating table, considering its regional and strategic interests? • What negotiation modalities are needed for multilateral strategic stability in the current context and who should be included? Immediately or in a phased approach? Enhancements: • Discuss how the CTBT and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission could play a part in bringing this multilateral negotiation about. • Describe the possible arms control formats that hold the most promise of a successful outcome. • Incorporate case studies of past arms control agreements (e.g., START, CTBT) to illustrate successes and how challenges were successfully addressed. • Assess the trajectory of non-strategic nuclear weapons development amid rapid technological development. • Analyze the impact of emerging technologies (cyber, AI, hypersonics) on nuclear stability and arms control frameworks. • Include practical exercises: Simulate negotiation scenarios, focusing on China’s participation and modalities for engagement.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	690
Project Name	Messaging and Marketing Multilateral Strategic Stability
Office	N/a
Embassy	U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	Design a campaign to communicate to the public the importance of multilateral strategic stability measures, including the necessity of China's participation.
Final Product Format	A Campaign in the format of a presentation and short memo.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Marketing</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arms Control/Non-Proliferation</i>
Additional Information	Key Questions: • How can the risks associated with China's rapidly expanding and concealed nuclear arsenal be effectively and reliably communicated to wide public audiences? • What messaging approaches resonate with diverse audiences (EU, G-77, Nuclear, general public)? • Which platforms and formats (social media, webinars, policy briefs) are most effective for such outreach? Enhancements: • Suggest messaging templates for each target audience, addressing their unique concerns and priorities. • Use evidence-based narratives to highlight both the universal security advantages of strategic stability. • Incorporate metrics for campaign effectiveness (engagement, awareness, policy impact). • Consider partnerships with influencers, think tanks, and advocacy groups to amplify reach.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	691
Project Name	Uncovering Hidden Mines: Satellite Geospatial Mapping and Regulatory Tracking of Illicit Mining in Liberia
Office	US Embassy Monrovia Public Diplomacy and Econ Sections.
Embassy	Liberia
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	This Diplomacy Lab project leverages open-source geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) and remote sensing to bring transparency to Liberia's mining sector. Student researchers will analyze satellite imagery (e.g., Google Earth, Sentinel-2, Planet Labs) with GIS and AI tools to identify, quantify, and map mining footprints nationwide. The project directly advances core U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities centered on critical mineral security, supply chain resilience, strategic competition, and anti-corruption. In June 2026, President Boakai established a national multi-agency taskforce to combat illicit mining, underscoring the urgent threat posed by unchecked extraction across Liberia's rivers, rural communities, and protected areas. Industry experts estimate that over 500 heavy excavators and dredges operate without supervision, depleting critical mineral deposits while eroding the rule of law and deterring credible foreign investment. Compounding this challenge, foreign operators and opaque Chinese geochemical surveys have left Liberian agencies with severe data asymmetries and limited field monitoring capacity. While the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) recently migrated to an open-source online cadastre (MCAS), the registry is not integrated with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA). As a result, companies routinely mine on mere exploration licenses or operate without environmental oversight. To fill this gap, the EPA and MME urgently require remote sensing capabilities to track illegal operations and identify environmental hazards like tailings dams and toxic runoff. By cross-referencing satellite detected sites against MCAS registry layers, the student team will produce an open-access monitoring tool that reinforces President Boakai's taskforce and strengthens EPA/LRA enforcement.
Final Product Format	Interactive Open-Source GIS Map Layer: Detailed spatial database mapping detected mining footprints (classified by scale: artisanal vs. industrial) and cross-referenced against official MCAS registry permits. Environmental & Compliance Hazard Matrix: Visual overlay identifying unpermitted dredges, tailings dams, toxic leaching fields, and water contamination risks to support EPA field inspections. Policy & Action Memo (5–8 pages): Briefing document for Embassy officers and the GOL Illicit Mining Taskforce detailing data gaps, uncollected revenue leads for the LRA, and regulatory enforcement recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>

Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	This project could include students from various departments and subject backgrounds, not just the ones listed in the proposal.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	692
Project Name	Waste-to-Wealth: Building Youth Micro-Enterprise Models for Municipal Waste Management in Liberia
Office	US Embassy Monrovia Public Diplomacy and Econ Sections.
Embassy	Liberia
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	This Diplomacy Lab project engages student researchers to develop a market-driven "Waste-to-Wealth" micro-enterprise blueprint and operational toolkit designed to foster youth entrepreneurship and address Greater Monrovia's urban sanitation crisis. The project directly advances U.S. commercial diplomacy and private-sector-led growth priorities while supporting the Sanitation and Economic Growth pillars of the Government of Liberia's ARREST Agenda. Student researchers will design scalable, low-cost business models for youth-led Community-Based Enterprises (CBEs), focusing on organic composting, plastic waste aggregation, and door-to-door neighborhood collection subscription services tailored for low-resource environments. Greater Monrovia generates hundreds of metric tons of solid waste daily, over 80% of which is mismanaged, open-burned, or dumped into urban waterways, creating severe public health risks and flooding. Concurrently, severe youth unemployment leaves young Liberians without formal economic opportunities. Because municipal waste systems face severe budget and logistical constraints, transitioning from non-existent public services to private, neighborhood-level micro-enterprises presents a high-impact, self-sustaining solution. The student team will analyze low-tech waste processing models, map financial sustainability frameworks for urban micro-enterprises, and draft a plug-and-play operational toolkit. This deliverable will enable local civil society organizations, youth entrepreneurs, and U.S. Embassy officers to drive grassroots economic development.
Final Product Format	Turnkey Waste-to-Wealth Business Toolkit: Modular guide featuring low-cost business plans, cash-flow models, and operational workflows for youth-led Community-Based Enterprises (CBEs) focusing on organic composting, plastic sorting, and subscription trash collection. Executive Strategy & Commercial Policy Memo (5–8 pages): Analysis detailing market opportunities in Liberia's waste value chain, regulatory barriers, and policy incentives needed to attract social impact investment. Stakeholder Briefing Deck: A visual presentation for Embassy officers, municipal leadership, and local civil society partners summarizing core business models and implementation steps.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Additional Information	This project could include environmental science together with international development and entrepreneurship. Preliminary Background Reading: Reports on Greater Monrovia solid waste management (Monrovia City Corporation), West Africa plastics/recycling market assessments, and government of Liberia ARREST Agenda policy guidelines.

Suggested Academic Level	Any
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Project ID	693
Project Name	American Innovation, Regional Impact: Advancing U.S. Commercial and Scientific Leadership on South Asia's Transboundary Haze Crisis
Office	Regional ESTH Office (REO)
Embassy	Nepal
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	South Asia is one of the world's most air-polluted regions. Air pollution in the region is driven by a combination of urban emissions, transport, industry, household energy use, agriculture, waste burning, and seasonal weather patterns. Because air pollutants and haze cross national borders, improving air quality cannot be addressed through national measures alone. It requires stronger regional cooperation, data sharing, monitoring, and coordinated policy responses. Nepal offers a useful case study: it sits between India and China and is affected by both regional air mass movement and domestic pollution sources. Growing government, private-sector, scientific, and public interest in air-quality monitoring and mitigation creates opportunities for international partnership and technology cooperation. For the United States, engagement combines environmental and public-health objectives with America First commercial diplomacy by connecting South Asian governments and institutions with competitive U.S. companies, universities, research organizations, and technology providers. This project will assess the scale and drivers of transboundary air pollution and haze in South Asia. It will identify opportunities for the United States and regional partners to strengthen air quality cooperation while creating pathways for U.S. commercial, scientific, and academic engagement. The study will examine which regional and bilateral forums are addressing air quality. This includes BIMSTEC, regional environmental mechanisms such as the Malé Declaration/ SACEP framework, and technical bodies like the Kathmandu based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The project will assess how the Government of Nepal and neighboring governments perceive key barriers to improving air quality. Likely barriers include limited monitoring capacity, data-sharing challenges, institutional coordination gaps, financing constraints, and limited access to appropriate technologies. The project will explore government interest in partnering with the U.S. private sector to address these gaps. The project will connect Nepal with U.S. firms and institutions in air-quality sensing, satellite monitoring, filtration, and analytics. It will compare U.S. firms against Chinese and Indian competitors on cost, financing, technology transfer, and after-sales support, then translate findings into 3–5 concrete recommendations such as pilot projects, public-private partnerships, or university collaborations. Consistent with the Administration's America First policies, recommendations will emphasize measurable outcomes and host-nation co-investment and advance U.S. exports and commercial interests while supporting regional air-quality goals.
Final Product Format	A short commercial opportunity assessment (5-7 pages) plus a brief final presentation to the U.S. Mission.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	Team Workstreams This project divides into four workstreams, running in parallel over 2–3 months:

	1. Regional Diplomacy: Map the Malé Declaration, ICIMOD, SAARC, BIMSTEC, UNEP, CCAC, and bilateral India-Nepal mechanisms using publicly available agreements, institutional websites, and secondary literature. Assess which institutions are driving cooperation versus which are inactive or symbolic. 2. Nepal's Institutional Landscape: Research Nepal's Department of Environment, Ministry of Forests and Environment, municipalities, and academic/research institutions primarily through literature review-government publications, ICIMOD/SACEP reporting, and academic sources on Nepal's air-quality institutions. Where possible, supplement with a small number of virtual interviews facilitated by Embassy Kathmandu. 3. U.S. Technology Ecosystem: Mapping survey of 10–20 U.S. companies, universities, and research institutions working in air-quality sensors, satellite/geospatial monitoring, AI/data analytics, and atmospheric modeling, using public company/university information and, where useful, brief email or virtual outreach. Assess which are affordable and appropriate for Nepal's context. 4. Diplomatic and Commercial Strategy: Synthesize findings from Workstreams 1–3 into 3–5 actionable recommendations. Assess competitive dynamics with Chinese and Indian firms and governments in the region.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	694
Project Name	Advancing American Diagnostics, Strengthening Global Health Security: Opportunities in Nepal
Office	Regional ESTH Office (REO)
Embassy	Nepal
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing global health security threat, and effective AMR management depends on accurate diagnostics. Nepal's diagnostic capacity, including antimicrobial susceptibility testing and rapid diagnostic platforms, varies widely across healthcare settings, while U.S. companies lead in diagnostic and laboratory innovation. This project examines whether that gap represents a realistic near-term commercial opportunity. The project will determine whether U.S. diagnostic technologies have a viable market entry point in Nepal's AMR response. This will not to design a new assistance program, but apply a market-based test: Does Nepal have a defined need, an identifiable customer, an available technology, and a feasible entry pathway? Methodology • Desk research on Nepal's AMR policies and diagnostic market landscape • Five to ten stakeholder interviews (Nepalese health sector and U.S. diagnostics industry) • Analysis across three areas: antimicrobial susceptibility testing, rapid diagnostics, and lab capacity Deliverables • Diagnostic Gaps Snapshot: A brief summary of the most relevant AMR diagnostic gaps in Nepal, based on desk research and available interviews • Opportunity Screening: A short assessment identifying one or two potential U.S. diagnostic technology opportunities, using a simple need/customer/technology checklist • Key Considerations & Next Steps – A brief summary of the main barriers (regulatory, market, and distribution) and two or three practical suggestions for how the Mission or U.S. companies might follow up
Final Product Format	A concise commercial opportunity assessment (8-10 pages) identifying two or three priority U.S. diagnostic technology opportunities in Nepal's AMR response, accompanied by a final briefing presentation to Embassy/Mission staff.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	Scope Boundaries: Students will not develop new diagnostic technologies, conduct clinical/lab research, evaluate specific pharmaceutical products, design Nepal's national AMR strategy, or recommend specific companies for procurement. A finding of "no near-term opportunity" is an acceptable and valid outcome.
Suggested Academic Level	

Project ID	695
Project Name	Advancing U.S. Space Dominance: Satellite and AI Technology Opportunities in Nepal
Office	Regional ESTH Office (REO)
Embassy	Nepal
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Nepal faces persistent development challenges including disaster risk, rural connectivity, agricultural management, infrastructure monitoring, and environmental change. These are increasingly addressable through space-enabled technologies like satellite imagery, remote sensing, satellite communications, and AI-driven analysis of space-derived data. U.S. companies lead globally in these fields, but limited analysis of Nepal's specific challenges identifiable paying customers, available solutions, and the U.S. companies positioned to deliver them. A key distinction shapes this assessment: baseline Earth observation data is available free under U.S. government open data policies. The commercial opportunities for private U.S. companies typically lie not in raw public data, but in the value-added layer built on top of it. For example, AI-driven analytics, specialized commercial imagery, and connectivity services. Students must clearly distinguish government-provided baseline data from private-sector commercial offerings throughout their analysis. This project determines whether realistic near-term commercial opportunities exist for U.S. space-enabled technology providers in Nepal, applying a market-based test to two priority areas: (1) satellite connectivity/communications for rural and mountainous regions with limited terrestrial infrastructure, and (2) satellite-derived Earth observation data for disaster risk, agriculture, or infrastructure monitoring. For each area, students will identify a specific problem, a paying customer, an available U.S. solution, and a market entry pathway — narrowing to one or two viable opportunities or determining that none exist (itself a legitimate finding). Deliverables • Problem-to-Opportunity Screening: A short assessment mapping the two priority areas (satellite connectivity and Earth observation/geospatial analytics) against potential paying customers and available U.S. solutions, distinguishing free/public U.S. government data sources from private-sector commercial offerings • Commercial Viability Assessment: A focused evaluation determining whether either area represents a realistic near-term opportunity, using a consistent need/customer/technology/barrier framework • Engagement Recommendations: 2-3 practical suggestions for how the U.S. Mission might support U.S. space-technology providers in pursuing identified opportunities
Final Product Format	A short commercial opportunity assessment (5-7 pages) plus a brief final presentation to the U.S. Mission.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	"This project is pre-scoped to two priority areas—satellite connectivity/communications and satellite-derived Earth observation data—rather than space exploration broadly (e.g., launch capability or space science), since Nepal has no space agency or space-based asset procurement program.

	Students should apply a consistent framework to each candidate area: Is there a clearly defined problem? Who would pay? Does a commercially available U.S. solution exist? What regulatory, licensing, or data-access barriers apply? Is there a realistic near-term pathway to market entry? Students should begin by researching which specific U.S. government data sources and private-sector providers are relevant to each priority area, and should identify which Nepalese government agencies, telecom regulators, or private companies currently budget for these services, versus those that rely solely on donor-funded pilots-this distinction will be critical to determining real commercial viability. Students should also identify, but are not expected to resolve, any regulatory or data-access constraints relevant to each area. Flagging these constraints will be a useful output even if a full legal analysis is out of scope. Given the short project timeline, students should complete a lightweight screening of both priority areas within the first 2–3 weeks, then concentrate deeper research on whichever area shows greater near-term promise. Both areas do not need equal depth of treatment. Students should identify their own starting points for research, including Nepal's relevant regulatory frameworks and disaster risk strategies, and publicly available information on U.S. satellite communications and Earth observation providers. The project should conclude with a clear "go/no-go" judgment on each candidate opportunity. The project is scoped for a single 10–12 week academic term.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	696
Project Name	From Gaps to Solutions: Advancing English for Health Security Communication in East Africa
Office	PD/RELO
Embassy	Ethiopia
Bureau	Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Project Description	The first-semester (AY26/27) Diplomacy Lab project, led by UNC Chapel Hill's Society-Centered AI Lab in the School of Data Science and Society, is examining English-language public health communication resources across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. A second-semester project would build directly on those findings, moving from identifying and prioritizing communication gaps to developing practical approaches to address them. Students would apply expertise in data science, human-centered design, applied linguistics/TESOL, instructional design, and/or public health to develop solutions with potential value for the U.S. Department of State's Regional English Language Office (RELO). Using the Semester 1 findings as its foundation, students would develop a focused set of English-language resources addressing the highest-priority needs identified through the research. These could address oral and written communication for tasks such as outbreak briefings, professional presentations, international coordination, or situation reporting. Where appropriate, students could explore responsible, human-centered AI or other digital approaches to enhance these resources; however, technology would be an option rather than a predetermined solution. The project would produce adaptable prototypes that RELO could further refine, pilot, and potentially incorporate into professional English programming.
Final Product Format	"Core Deliverables • English for Health Security Communication Toolkit ○ Approximately 3-5 prototype training resources/modules ○ Based directly on Semester 1 findings ○ Address priority oral and/or written communication needs ○ Include learner activities and facilitator guidance ○ Designed for adaptation to different audiences and proficiency levels • RELO Options & Recommendations Memo ○ Approximately 4-6 pages ○ Explains the priority needs addressed and rationale for the proposed solutions ○ Identifies potential audiences and applications ○ Recommends opportunities for refinement, piloting, and RELO use ○ Addresses AI/digital options where relevant • Final Presentation ○ Approximately 10-15 slides ○ Connects the Semester 1 findings to the solutions developed ○ Demonstrates the resulting resources ○ Highlights potential applications for RELO Potential Additional Outputs Depending on the findings and available expertise, students could also develop AI-enabled simulations, digital/mobile resources, assessment tools, or conduct limited user testing.

Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Global Health</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	697
Project Name	Decode China's Global Propaganda Playbook. Be on the Cutting Edge of Tracking One of the Most Sophisticated Global Propaganda Actors of Our Time
Office	Public Affairs Section
Embassy	China
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	China has a tight hold on the information it disseminates among its citizens within China, weaving together a narrative that puts the Party above all and quietly signals to leaders and netizens alike how they should align with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). But this effort is expanding. Outside of China, we've seen CCP media outlets sprout across every part of the globe, carrying the Party's message to every country and continent and furthering China's objectives from Africa to South America and beyond. Without the Great Firewall to control information flows, however, China's propaganda efforts outside of China are more nuanced, relying on local partnerships and paid influencers to carry CCP messages; and deploying AI-generated content meant to overwhelm, disrupt, and confuse. For the professionals who track China's propaganda machine, getting a clear understanding of what's out there is a daunting task. That's where your skills and expertise come in. This project, sponsored by U.S. Embassy Beijing, will focus on the creation of a dashboard tracking English-language CCP propaganda, based on a clear methodology developed by your team. This dashboard will create the foundation for deeper analysis of trends in ideology, policy, and goals of China's Communist Party, allowing us to better understand China's actions around the globe and design targeted strategies to counter China's influence.
Final Product Format	The project will culminate in the creation of a dashboard tracking English-language propaganda in traditional and social media, along with a clear methodology for how information was identified, classified, and interpreted. Accompanying the dashboard will be a short report, outlining trends and notable findings and including recommended next steps.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	Main research questions include: 1. What are the most frequently used methods to disseminate English-language CCP propaganda? 2. Is the CCP targeting specific areas or regions as they create, publish, and amplify English-language propaganda? 3. In what sectors are we seeing English-language CCP propaganda? Government, non-profit, public, etc.? 4. What are the most common themes or messages being disseminated through CCP propaganda? 5. Based on your findings, what suggestions do you have for countering CCP propaganda?
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	698
Project Name	Mass Migration and Crime in Europe: Patterns by Country of Origin, Generation, and Offense
Office	U.S. Mission to EU - Political Section
Embassy	U.S. Mission to EU
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	Mass migration has become an increasingly important political, criminal-justice, legal, and public-policy issue across Europe. European countries have experienced substantial changes in the size and composition of their migrant populations while differing considerably in immigration patterns, criminal laws, policing practices, demographic characteristics, integration policies, and methods for collecting and publishing crime statistics. Differences across member states' engagement with immigrant populations provide an opportunity for rigorous comparative research examining whether and how mass migration has affected patterns and frequency of crime and interaction with criminal-justice systems across Europe. This project would examine crime and criminal-justice outcomes among migrant populations and their descendants, with particular emphasis on country of origin, generational patterns, and type of offense. Students should analyze first-generation migrants and, data permitting, second- and third-generation populations or equivalent national statistical categories to assess changes in criminal behavior. The research should distinguish among suspects, arrests or police contacts, prosecutions, convictions, sentencing, incarceration, and recidivism where those measures are available. Crime should be disaggregated by offense type, including violent crime, homicide, sexual offenses, robbery, theft and other property crimes, drug offenses, weapons offenses, public-order offenses, and other categories supported by reliable national and sub-national data. The project should also include a longitudinal component comparing crime patterns before and after the emergence of contemporary mass migration in Europe, as well as an examination of whether government data-collection, classification, disclosure, or publication practices impede assessment of migration-related crime trends. A central objective should be to determine how outcomes vary by migrant country of origin, generation, offense type, time-period, and what demographic, socioeconomic, legal, policy, or data-transparency factors help explain differences across migrant groups and European countries, in comparison to local populations.
Final Product Format	A 20–25 page comparative research report, accompanied by a 3–4-page policy-focused executive summary and a comprehensive data annex or spreadsheet containing the underlying country-level, country-of-origin, generational patterns, offense-specific, and historical data used in the analysis. The final product, data permitting, should examine: • Crime and criminal-justice outcomes among migrant populations compared with relevant native-born populations; • Crime rates by individual migrant country of origin, as compared to local population; • Differences among first-, second-, and third-generation populations or equivalent national statistical categories; • Changes in criminal offending across generations;

	• Rates by specific type of crime, rather than aggregate criminality alone; • Violent crime, including homicide and serious assault; • Sexual offenses; • Robbery; • Theft, burglary, and other property offenses; • Drug offenses; • Weapons offenses; • Public-order offenses; • Organized or gang-related crime where reliable data are available; • Suspect, prosecution, conviction, sentencing, incarceration, and recidivism rates where available; • Differences by age and sex; • Relevant socioeconomic variables, including employment, income, education, and neighborhood characteristics; • Differences according to migration category or reason for migration where those data can be linked reliably; • Comparisons among migrant-origin groups within the same receiving country; • Differences in outcomes among European countries with different migration, integration, policing, and criminal-justice policies; • Crime patterns during a historical baseline period preceding the contemporary period of mass migration compared with the most recent available data; • Changes in both the composition of migrant populations and patterns of offending over time; and • The availability, quality, and transparency of official crime statistics concerning nationality, country of origin, migration background, ancestry, ethnicity, and generation. Students should provide both information about methodology and the underlying comparative dataset or spreadsheet used in the analysis.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>

Additional Information	The project should prioritize official administrative data, quantitative analysis, methodological transparency, and original analysis of underlying datasets. Potential sources include national and sub-national statistical offices, justice ministries, interior ministries, police and prosecutorial authorities, prison administrations, national crime-prevention agencies, Eurostat, and peer-reviewed criminological research.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	699
Project Name	The Impact of Mass Migration on Welfare, Social Benefits, and Healthcare Systems in Europe
Office	U.S. Mission to EU - Political Section
Embassy	U.S. Mission to EU
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	Mass migration has become an increasingly important fiscal, economic, and public-policy issue across Europe. European governments maintain extensive welfare systems that provide healthcare, housing assistance, unemployment support, family benefits, education, pensions, and other publicly funded services. At the same time, European countries differ substantially in the scale and composition of migration, eligibility for public benefits, labor-market integration, welfare structures, and national migration policies. These differences provide an opportunity for comparative research examining how mass migration affects government expenditures, demand for public services, and the fiscal sustainability of European welfare systems. This project would assess the fiscal and social-service impacts of mass migration across selected European countries, with particular attention to healthcare utilization and expenditures, cash and in-kind social benefits, housing assistance, unemployment and family benefits, education, and other major publicly funded services. Students would compare government expenditures associated with migrant populations against tax payments, social-insurance contributions, and other fiscal contributions. A central component of the research should be disaggregation by migrant country of origin and, wherever data permit, by generation. The analysis should examine first-generation migrants as well as second- and third-generation populations or equivalent national statistical categories, including the children and descendants of immigrants. Students should assess whether fiscal contributions, use of social benefits, healthcare utilization, employment outcomes, educational outcomes, and long-term reliance on public assistance differ significantly by country of origin and across generations. Denmark could serve as a principal case study because of the extensive demographic and country-of-origin data available through its national statistical system, with comparable analysis conducted elsewhere in Europe wherever sufficiently detailed data are available.
Final Product Format	A 20-25 page comparative research report, accompanied by a 3-4 page policy-focused executive summary and a data annex containing comparable country-level, country-of-origin, and generational indicators, together with underlying data where available. The research should examine: Government expenditures associated with migrant populations; Migrant utilization of healthcare and major social-benefit programs; Tax payments, social-insurance contributions, employment, and other fiscal contributions; Differences in fiscal impact and benefit utilization by migrant country of origin; Differences between first-generation migrants and second- and third-generation populations or equivalent national statistical categories;

	Intergenerational changes in employment, earnings, tax contributions, educational outcomes, healthcare utilization, and receipt of public benefits; Differences among labor, family, humanitarian, and other migration categories; Short-, medium-, and longer-term fiscal effects of mass migration; Country-level differences in welfare eligibility and benefit structures; The relationship between employment and labor-market integration and reliance on public assistance; Comparative outcomes among migrant-origin groups within the same receiving country; The extent to which fiscal and social outcomes converge with or diverge from native-born populations across generations; Country case studies representing different European welfare and migration-policy models; and Policies associated with greater fiscal self-sufficiency and reduced long-term reliance on government benefits. Students should provide the underlying comparative dataset or spreadsheet used in the analysis.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>European and Eurasian Studies</i>
Additional Information	The project should prioritize empirical, quantitative, and comparable data and clearly identify limitations in available statistics. Potential sources include Eurostat, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, national statistical offices, finance and social-affairs ministries, national healthcare authorities, European Union institutions, and peer-reviewed academic research. Students could draw on established immigration-economics literature, including the work of Harvard economist George J. Borjas on immigrant welfare participation, fiscal effects, economic assimilation, and intergenerational outcomes, while also engaging competing empirical findings and methodological approaches in the broader literature. Denmark could be included as a case study because its statistical authorities, through Statbank, maintain particularly detailed information on immigrant populations, descendants of immigrants, and outcomes by country of origin. Students could use Denmark's experience to establish a benchmark for the level of disaggregation sought elsewhere in Europe and identify other countries where similarly detailed administrative or statistical data are available. The study should carefully distinguish between foreign-born residents and foreign citizens; European Union and non-European Union migrants; labor, family, humanitarian, and other migration categories; recent arrivals and long-term residents; and first-generation migrants and subsequent generations or descendants of

	immigrants. Because national definitions vary, students should clearly document how each country defines immigrant background, second generation, descendants, or comparable categories and avoid assuming that national datasets are directly equivalent. Country of origin and generation should be treated as primary analytical variables rather than secondary demographic characteristics. Where reliable data allow, students should compare fiscal contributions, employment, welfare receipt, public healthcare utilization, educational outcomes, and other relevant measures among individual migrant-origin populations across multiple generations. Country selection should provide variation in both the scale of mass migration and welfare-state structures. Potential case studies could include Denmark, Germany, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Italy, and Spain, with additional countries incorporated based on the availability of detailed data. A central objective should be to determine which migrant populations generate which fiscal and social-service effects; how those effects vary by country of origin, migration category, and generation; whether those effects diminish, persist, or increase in subsequent generations; and why outcomes differ among European countries and migrant groups.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	700
Project Name	Using Commercial Technology to Identify Economic Opportunities in Chad
Office	US Embassy Chad
Embassy	Chad
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	Identify commercially credible models, for use in Chad, with a small local footprint using one or more of these types of commercial technology: digital land ownership records or other mechanisms to enable contracts for mineral resource extraction; digital export enablement for specialty products; telemedicine; or identification of Starlink-enabled businesses that could be adapted to operation in Chad. Students will assess whether the technologies could benefit Chad, and how they could be deployed, governed, financed, maintained and scaled under real operating constraints. The constraints in Chad's commercial environment include: weak infrastructure, unreliable electricity and connectivity, a small formal market, limited technical capacity, regulatory unpredictability, and payment risk. The research objective is to develop an evidence-based feasibility and implementation blueprint for any of four small footprint commercial technology opportunities in Chad, with pilot concepts for digital land ownership records (cadastres), telemedicine, export enablement, and the strongest transferable Starlink-enabled business model, while identifying credible roles for U.S. companies and income-generating roles for Chadian partners.
Final Product Format	The deliverable sought is an Options memo – 5-25 pages with appendices, as needed.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	Chad's commercial environment has major gaps across several sectors that may be addressable through low-footprint technology and offshore technical assistance: Incomplete or fragmented property records impede infrastructure planning, agricultural investment, mining development, taxation, credit, and the resolution of competing claims. In health, scarce medical professionals, long distances, weak health infrastructure, and uneven connectivity limit access to care outside N'Djamena. Chadian producers of specialty agricultural products struggle to meet international requirements, establish traceable origin, aggregate supply, find buyers, and manage logistics and payments. Meanwhile, satellite internet is functioning comparatively well, but Chad has not yet captured the range of businesses and livelihoods that reliable remote connectivity has enabled elsewhere. Chad needs ideas for digital cadastral systems, telemedicine, export-enablement services, and Starlink-enabled businesses, and the Embassy seeks to make America more prosperous – hence the search for U.S.-based tech firms (Starlink, Meta, other start-ups) that can close gaps. Systems designed for wealthy markets can fail where electricity, connectivity, data quality, institutional authority, training, maintenance, and payment systems are weak. The core policy and commercial challenge is therefore to determine what minimum viable systems could work in Chad, which actors would buy and operate them, what safeguards they require, and where U.S. companies could participate responsibly and competitively. Secondly, which systems require virtually no U.S. presence, or occasional presence, in Chad.

Suggested Academic Level	Graduate
Project ID	701
Project Name	Orbiting Competition: Designing a Space Diplomacy Capstone Tabletop Exercise
Office	Area Studies
Embassy	
Bureau	Personnel & Training (PERT)
Project Description	Modern strategic competition increasingly unfolds below the threshold of armed conflict, extending into high-stakes critical domains like low-Earth orbit (LEO) telecommunications, dual-use space infrastructure, and orbital technology standards. As near-peer competitors deploy integrated economic, technical, and diplomatic levers to assert influence in space, foreign affairs professionals require structured frameworks to proactively anticipate and counter these adversarial campaigns. To address this institutional gap, the Department of State's Area Studies division (DTET/AS) is designing AS303: Strategic Competition—a course that equips foreign affairs personnel with non-kinetic statecraft toolkits aligned directly with the 2025 National Security Strategy and the 2026–2030 Agency Strategic Plan. This Diplomacy Lab project invites a faculty-led student team to serve as the architects of the course's dynamic capstone assignment. Student researchers will design, build, and pilot a scaffolded, half-day tabletop exercise (TTX) centered on space diplomacy and contestation. Participating students will research emerging space threats, map interagency levers across the DIMEFIL model (Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic, Financial, Intelligence, Law Enforcement), and craft realistic exercise injects featuring Red, Blue, and Grey cell dynamics. The capstone simulation will lead directly into an afternoon session where course participants write, refine, and present post-tailored Strategic Competition Action Plans. For faculty and students, this project integrates theory and practice, offering a rare opportunity to build a tangible training simulation directly utilized across the Department. During the Spring 2027 semester, the student team will collaborate closely with Department subject matter experts to refine the exercise mechanics and conduct a live trial run of the simulation. The university team will deliver a complete scenario package, facilitator guides, and analytical rubrics, gaining deep expertise in space statecraft while equipping American diplomats to defend U.S. technological dominance and national interests.
Final Product Format	The university team will deliver a complete scenario package, facilitator guides, and analytical rubrics, gaining deep expertise in space statecraft while equipping American diplomats to defend U.S. technological dominance and national interests.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	University teams will be provided further guidance and resources once accepted.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	702
Project Name	Pathways to Self-Reliance in Camp Settings: Beneficiary Characteristics, Program Design, and Durable Solutions in West and Central African Refugee Camps
Office	Foreign Assistance Hub / Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response (DHR)
Embassy	Senegal
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	This research examines why some refugee populations in West and Central African camp settings achieve durable self-reliance while others remain trapped in prolonged, aid-dependent encampment, focusing on Mbéra camp in Mauritania alongside comparable camps in Central Africa to analyze the interaction between beneficiary characteristics and camp-based program design. What sets this study apart is its focus on a critical but underexamined design choice within these controlled camp environments: whether targeting assistance based on vulnerability as is standard practice rather than potential for self-reliance or universal coverage may inadvertently prolong the very dependency it aims to alleviate, a question with direct implications for how the Department of State structures future camp-based programming in the region. By producing a camp-specific comparative framework that cross-references beneficiary profiles with targeting and program design choices, this project will deliver actionable, evidence-based recommendations that directly advance the U.S. Government's priority of promoting self-reliance over long-term aid dependency, enabling the Department to target USG resources more efficiently in West and Central African camp operations, reduce the fiscal and diplomatic burden of protracted encampment, and demonstrate measurable stewardship of taxpayer-funded humanitarian assistance.
Final Product Format	Report - maximum of 5 pages
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Food Security</i>
Additional Information	Question to be analyzed: Within formal refugee camp settings in West and Central Africa, what combination of beneficiary characteristics and program design and targeting choices most strongly determines whether camp residents achieve durable self-reliance, versus remaining in prolonged, aid-dependent encampment?
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	703
Project Name	Identifying Best Practices for Strengthening Oversight of Donor Contributions to International Organizations
Office	Office of Inspections (OIG/ISP)
Bureau	Office of Inspector General (OIG)
Project Description	In FY 2024, the most recent year for which data are available, the U.S. Government provided over \$19.5 billion to 189 international organizations and multilateral entities. The Department of State's share of that total, \$9.3 billion, represented 40 percent of assistance spending. The Department has a responsibility to Congress and to taxpayers to ensure U.S. financial contributions to international organizations are used effectively and for their intended purposes. However, policies and legal requirements of international organizations often impede the Department's efforts to obtain detailed information about the use of its contributions. For the proposed Diplomacy Lab project, students will assess oversight products (audits, evaluations, inspections, investigations) from audit functions within the United Nations system and from OIG-equivalents of other major donors to determine their scope and effectiveness. UN audit entities include the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and the Board of Auditors. Examples of UN organizations outside the jurisdiction of the OIOS which manage their own internal audit and oversight services include the World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank Group (including IBRD and IDA), and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Oversight entities of other major donors include the European Commission (European Anti-Fraud Office, European Public Prosecutor's Office and European Court of Auditors), MOPAN (Multilateral Performance Network), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit). Researchers will identify each entity's evaluation methodology, scope and process related to oversight of contributions to international organizations, examine results, highlight trends and best practices, and make observations related to improving effectiveness of oversight for U.S. contributions.
Final Product Format	Research paper (15-20 pages) with recommended actions
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Law</i>
Additional Information	This research project would build on the following recent OIG products: https://www.stateoig.gov/report/oig-26-03 and https://www.stateoig.gov/report/isp-i-26-02 .
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	704
Project Name	Mapping Central China's Logistics Network
Office	Consulate General Wuhan
Embassy	China
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	China's export volumes and the activity of its major ports are well known. Less well known are the ambitions of interior cities to become major logistics air, rail, and riverine shipping centers. Wuhan, Zhengzhou, and Jiujiang are all making major attempts to become critical logistics nodes through the Wuhan-based China-Europe Railway Express, Ezhou Huahu Airport, Zhengzhou Xinzheng Airport, and Zhejiang-Jiangxi-Guangdong Grand Canal project. As with many projects in China, however, it is often difficult to separate ambitious project announcements from real underlying activity and potential. This proposed project would use open-source data to trace the historical development of air, rail, and shipping networks operating out of Wuhan, Zhengzhou, and Jiujiang and develop visual aids to help policymakers quickly understand the development of these interior hubs, especially as compared to China's coastal ports. A combination of historical data, visual displays of information, and sober assessment of whether actual shipping numbers are meeting initial expectations, would help us "ground truth" the extent to which provincial ambitions are being realized, and whether China's interior is quietly becoming an import player in China's export-oriented economic policy.
Final Product Format	Database of information about trade flows and visualizations of trade networks, open to additional suggestions.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Additional Information	Consulate General Wuhan is responsible for the provinces of Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	705
Project Name	Environmental Success and Setbacks in Central China
Office	Consulate General Wuhan
Embassy	China
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Twenty years ago China had a reputation for poor air quality and toxic water sources. More recently the Chinese government has been touting its success in reducing smog, cleaning up lakes and rivers, and innovating in green technology. Among these touted successes have been stories about the environmental recovery of the Yangtze River and Poyang Lake, including recovering fish stocks and other growing animal populations. State media claims this is a result of governmental policies, but we would like to better understand the situation. Using publicly available satellite imagery of the Yangtze River and Poyang Lake, both contemporary and historically, as well as available scientific sources on water quality, fish stocks, and wildlife population, this project would bring rigor to state claims and help us better understand the successes and setbacks, as well as the costs and benefits to local communities of recent government policies.
Final Product Format	White paper analysis of satellite imagery and available scientific data.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Geography</i>
Additional Information	Consulate General Wuhan is responsible for the provinces of Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	706
Project Name	Critical Mineral Extraction from Mine and Coal Waste
Office	Office of Environmental Quality
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	The Office of Environmental Quality in the Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES/ENV) seeks one to three research teams to assess opportunities for critical minerals extraction from mine and coal waste in select regions. Building secure supply chains for critical minerals is a key priority for the U.S. government. Extracting critical minerals from mine and coal waste can be a means to rapidly source critical minerals into U.S. supply chains. It also presents the opportunity to harness technological innovation as a part of secure supply chains while reducing the risk of waste contamination. New, proven technologies can unlock resources from over 200 billion tons of untreated mining by-products worldwide and be deployed within five years. The research team(s) will work closely with State Department staff to use open-source information, key informant interviews, and other unclassified resources to: (1) create GIS maps and assessments of mine waste locations and volumes in selected countries; (2) contact geological groups in-country for reports or work in progress on mine waste inventories; (3) assess the logistical conditions and regulatory framework for recovery; (4) analyze the opportunities and challenges for U.S. companies to recover critical minerals; and (5) examine the tools and resources the U.S. Government could deploy to overcome barriers, build partnerships, and find solutions. This project will have a regional focus, with particular interest in Africa, Central America, and South America, with each team focusing on approximately three countries.
Final Product Format	Deliverables for this project include: (1) an outline of the project, including key objectives; (2) a draft research paper or technical report, including a high-level summary for policy makers; (3) the finalized paper or report; and (4) a virtual presentation, with the primary audience being action officers at the Department of State and other U.S. government agencies (5) a baseline data set that can be expanded as additional information becomes available.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Geography</i>
Additional Information	The Office of Environmental Quality will consider modifications to the project's scope in line with Department priorities and the relevant expertise of the research team. The outline of the project will be developed through consultation between the research team and the Department of State.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	707
Project Name	Mapping Uruguay's Biotech Frontier: Opportunities and Risks in an Emerging Sector
Office	Public Diplomacy Section at U.S. Embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay.
Embassy	Uruguay
Bureau	Public Affairs (PA)
Project Description	Uruguay is emerging as a growing hub for biotechnology investment and research in South America, drawing interest from both U.S. and foreign firms — including Chinese companies like BGI Group, which has established a \$10 million facility in the country. As biotechnology becomes an increasingly critical arena for economic competitiveness, scientific innovation, and national security, Embassy Montevideo's Public Diplomacy Section seeks to better understand Uruguay's biotech ecosystem to strengthen U.S. engagement, promote trusted American technology partners, and identify emerging risks tied to foreign — particularly Chinese — investment in this sector. This project will task a student team with mapping the landscape of Uruguay's biotechnology sector, including key domestic and foreign players, research institutions, government initiatives, and investment trends. Students will identify concrete opportunities for U.S. companies to engage commercially in Uruguay's biotech space, as well as opportunities for Embassy Montevideo's Public Diplomacy Section to use programming, exchanges, and outreach to reinforce U.S. leadership and visibility in the sector. The project will also ask students to flag potential national security concerns arising from foreign — especially Chinese — investment or influence in Uruguay's biotech infrastructure, drawing on open-source research and comparative case studies from the region. The final product will directly inform the Embassy's public diplomacy strategy and support broader U.S. government efforts to promote trusted, transparent biotechnology partnerships in Latin America.
Final Product Format	A 15–20 page landscape analysis and options memo, including: (1) a sector map of key public and private biotech actors in Uruguay; (2) a summary of opportunities for U.S. commercial and public diplomacy engagement; and (3) a short risk-assessment section on foreign investment and influence concerns.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Global Health</i>
Additional Information	1–2 teams (a second team could focus specifically on the national security/foreign influence angle while the first focuses on sector-mapping and commercial opportunity) Students should be prepared to use open-source research methods, as much of the relevant investment and corporate data will not be centrally available. This project is expected to be completed within a single semester (~4 months).
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	708
Project Name	Building Panamanian Resilience to CCP Influence Operations: Public Education and Outreach Strategies
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Panama
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	Context and Importance: Panama occupies a position of exceptional strategic significance in the Western Hemisphere, and in recent years China has sought to translate economic engagement into political and infrastructural leverage across the country. Panama's 2025 decision not to renew its participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative marked the first such reversal by a Western Hemisphere nation, a step the Department of State has publicly welcomed as recognition that when countries make deals with the CCP, they are often left with sub-standard results and unsustainable debt burdens, jeopardizing both their development and their sovereignty. Despite this high-level policy momentum, there remains a persistent gap in Panamanian public understanding of how CCP economic statecraft, disinformation, and efforts to cultivate influence over local officials and business leaders operate in practice – and how they differ from transparent, rules-based partnership models like those the United States offers. Local journalists, civil society organizations, students, and even municipal officials often lack accessible research and outreach materials that explain, in clear and locally resonant terms, the risks associated with predatory lending, opaque infrastructure deals, and technology dependency on China-linked firms – including the technology found in cheap consumer electronics, electric vehicles, and other popular Chinese-origin products. Embassy Panama City's Public Diplomacy and Political/Economic Sections need rigorous, well-sourced, and creatively packaged research and outreach concepts that can inform press engagement, educational partnerships, and community-level messaging without appearing heavy-handed or overtly political. Project Purpose and Scope: This project invites a faculty-led student team to research and design an education and outreach toolkit – which might include policy briefs, public-facing explainer content, curricula for university or civil-society partners, digital media concepts, or comparative case studies – aimed at strengthening Panamanian public awareness of CCP influence tactics and the comparative advantages of U.S. and private-sector partnership models. Students might examine case studies of China's engagement in Panamanian ports, telecommunications, and municipal infrastructure; analyze regional precedents where other countries have pushed back against similar pressure, including recent hemispheric solidarity statements on Panama's sovereignty; or develop outreach materials tailored to specific Panamanian audiences such as students, small businesses, or local journalists. The Embassy will work with the selected faculty lead before the semester begins to refine the specific deliverables and ensure the project's scope matches available time and resources. Ultimately, this project offers students a rare opportunity to contribute directly to an active foreign policy priority, while providing Embassy Panama City with substantive, locally attuned research and outreach concepts that can inform our engagement strategy in the months ahead.

Final Product Format	Education and outreach toolkit
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	709
Project Name	China's EV Surge in Brazil: Trade Remedies, Brazilian and Chinese Incentives, and Competitive Implications for U.S. Automakers
Office	Economic Section
Embassy	Brazil
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	Chinese electric and hybrid vehicles have rapidly captured Brazil's automotive market, with Chinese automaker BYD ranking as Brazil's top-selling retail vehicle producer as of April 2026 and Chinese brands now holding roughly three-quarters of the electrified vehicle segment in the country. While Brazil imposed phased-in AD/CVD tariffs as high as 35 percent in July 2026, which may impact further fast rates of growth, this expansion into Brazil mirrors China's expanded dominance in sectors like steel and tires, raising urgent questions about the effectiveness of Brazilian trade defenses. Brazil is already a regional priority market for Chinese vehicles, with Brazilian consumers expressing preferences for the design and price point of the Chinese-subsidized cars. BYD and other importers promote their longer-term plans to expand domestic production in Brazil of Chinese EVs. As a market entrance strategy, BYD cultivated state government and rideshare fleets, with President Lula attending an October 9, 2025 ribbon-cutting at a BYD plant that had been a site of major labor and trafficking violations in 2024 during the plant's construction. This project asks student teams to examine the drivers, durability, and downstream implications of this shift and to identify policy options for the United States to promote fair market conditions for U.S. industry and interests (including but not limited to combatting unfair labor and trade practices). Additionally, based on the analysis of the EV case study in Brazil, the student teams should also provide suggestions for other industries in Brazil that could follow a similar pattern. The project is organized into three research tracks suitable for separate teams: (1) evaluating the effectiveness of Brazilian trade remedy measures against Chinese EVs and related products, benchmarked against other countries' experiences countering Chinese imports; (2) identifying which Brazilian and Chinese government and state-level tax incentives and regulations have most benefited Chinese brands, paired with a survey of Brazilian consumer preferences; and (3) projecting the three-to-five-year impact on U.S. and traditional automakers' market share, supply chains, employment in Brazil, and dealership networks in Brazil and the wider region, taking into consideration the billions of USD investment announced in Brazil by U.S. auto industries over [10] years. And, concluding with suggestions for other industries in Brazil that could follow a similar trajectory. (4) Together, these tracks should give the Department a comprehensive, evidence-based picture of this competitive shift, anticipate future industries of concern as appropriate, and lay out options for responding to it.
Final Product Format	Each team should present a report (15-20 pages), including a 2-page executive summary. Ideally accompanied by simple quantitative modeling or visualizations of data gathered.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>

Additional Information	Maximum Number of University Teams: Three (3) – one (1) per track. Brazil, historically one of Latin America’s most important automotive markets for U.S. manufacturers, is undergoing a rapid and structural shift driven by the explosive growth of Chinese electric and hybrid vehicle sales. In April 2026, China’s BYD overtook Volkswagen to become Brazil’s top-selling retail automaker just four years after entering the market. Chinese vehicle exports to Brazil nearly tripled in the first quarter of 2026 alone, and Chinese brands now capture roughly three-quarters of Brazil’s fast-growing electrified vehicle segment. This growth has continued despite Brazilian tariffs on Chinese vehicles rising as high as 35 percent, and it mirrors a broader pattern seen in other sectors, such as steel and tires, where Chinese import volumes have similarly tested the limits of Brazilian trade defense measures. Understanding why these tools have or have not worked, what is driving Chinese brands’ commercial success at the state and consumer level, and what the downstream consequences could be for U.S. industry is a timely and multi-dimensional challenge well suited to a team-based research effort. This project is organized into three distinct but complementary research tracks, allowing multiple student teams to contribute to a shared policy question from different angles: Track 1: Trade Remedy Effectiveness. This track examines the track record of Brazilian trade remedy measures (including antidumping and countervailing measures) against Chinese EVs and related products (steel, tires, and other inputs) over the past several years. Students would assess how these measures were designed, how effectively they were enforced, and whether they meaningfully slowed Chinese import growth. This analysis should be benchmarked against comparable trade defense experiences in other countries, such as Mexico, the European Union, or others that have imposed tariffs or restrictions on Chinese EVs and industrial goods, to identify which approaches have proven more durable and why. Track 2: State Incentives and Consumer Preferences. This track investigates how Brazil’s patchwork of state-level tax incentives (currently in place in 17 of Brazil’s 27 states) and regulatory structures has shaped the competitive landscape for electrified vehicles. Students would identify which specific incentive structures have most directly benefited Chinese brands, and pair this analysis with a survey or study of Brazilian consumer preferences, examining price sensitivity, charging infrastructure, and brand perception to determine which policy levers and product attributes are actually driving Chinese automakers’ gains. Track 3: Competitive Impact and Regional Spillover. This track projects the potential medium-term impact of continued Chinese EV expansion on U.S. and other traditional automakers operating in Brazil, including effects on market share, local supply chains, dealership and service networks, and employment in Brazil. Students would extend this analysis regionally, exploring the scenario in which Brazil becomes a manufacturing and export hub for Chinese-made vehicles across Latin America over a three-to-five-year horizon, and assess the implications for U.S. commercial interests and regional industrial competitiveness, as well as analyze which industries in Brazil could follow a similar trajectory. Brazil, historically one of Latin America’s most important automotive markets for U.S. manufacturers, is undergoing a rapid and structural shift driven by the explosive growth
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	of Chinese electric and hybrid vehicle sales. In April 2026, China's BYD overtook Volkswagen to become Brazil's top-selling retail automaker just four years after entering the market. Chinese vehicle exports to Brazil nearly tripled in the first quarter of 2026 alone, and Chinese brands now capture roughly three-quarters of Brazil's fast-growing electrified vehicle segment. This growth has continued despite Brazilian tariffs on Chinese vehicles rising as high as 35 percent, and it mirrors a broader pattern seen in other sectors, such as steel and tires, where Chinese import volumes have similarly tested the limits of Brazilian trade defense measures. Understanding why these tools have or have not worked, what is driving Chinese brands' commercial success at the state and consumer level, and what the downstream consequences could be for U.S. industry is a timely and multi-dimensional challenge well suited to a team-based research effort. This project is organized into three distinct but complementary research tracks, allowing multiple student teams to contribute to a shared policy question from different angles: Track 1: Trade Remedy Effectiveness. This track examines the track record of Brazilian trade remedy measures (including antidumping and countervailing measures) against Chinese EVs and related products (steel, tires, and other inputs) over the past several years. Students would assess how these measures were designed, how effectively they were enforced, and whether they meaningfully slowed Chinese import growth. This analysis should be benchmarked against comparable trade defense experiences in other countries, such as Mexico, the European Union, or others that have imposed tariffs or restrictions on Chinese EVs and industrial goods, to identify which approaches have proven more durable and why. Track 2: State Incentives and Consumer Preferences. This track investigates how Brazil's patchwork of state-level tax incentives (currently in place in 17 of Brazil's 27 states) and regulatory structures has shaped the competitive landscape for electrified vehicles. Students would identify which specific incentive structures have most directly benefited Chinese brands, and pair this analysis with a survey or study of Brazilian consumer preferences, examining price sensitivity, charging infrastructure, and brand perception to determine which policy levers and product attributes are actually driving Chinese automakers' gains. Track 3: Competitive Impact and Regional Spillover. This track projects the potential medium-term impact of continued Chinese EV expansion on U.S. and other traditional automakers operating in Brazil, including effects on market share, local supply chains, dealership and service networks, and employment in Brazil. Students would extend this analysis regionally, exploring the scenario in which Brazil becomes a manufacturing and export hub for Chinese-made vehicles across Latin America over a three-to-five-year horizon, and assess the implications for U.S. commercial interests and regional industrial competitiveness, as well as analyze which industries in Brazil could follow a similar trajectory.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	710
Project Name	Project Constellation: Building a Global Partnership Ecosystem for the Space Economy
Office	Multilateral Strategy Office
Embassy	U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	The global space economy is entering a period of rapid transformation as governments, commercial companies, universities, and emerging space economies develop new capabilities and seek international partnerships. The United States has a unique opportunity to shape this emerging ecosystem by connecting American technology, expertise, investment, and commercial capabilities with international partners while strengthening U.S. leadership in multilateral space affairs. Project Constellation: Building a Constellation of Outer Space Partners at the United Nations is a new U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna initiative designed to expand access to the global space economy and build partnerships among governments, international organizations, U.S. companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, universities, and emerging space economies. The initiative will use the United Nations and the annual U.S. Space Forum in Vienna as platforms for identifying opportunities for collaboration and connecting international partners with the broader U.S. space ecosystem. A student team will help UNVIE develop a practical partnership development strategy for Project Constellation. The project will build on a fall 2026 Diplomacy Lab project focused on developing the initiative's brand, marketing, communications, website, podcast, and audience strategy. The spring project will take the next step: how can Project Constellation translate its communications platform and growing network into sustained partnerships, commercial opportunities, and measurable engagement? Students will examine the space ecosystem from the perspective of potential partners and develop a framework for identifying, prioritizing, cultivating, and sustaining partnerships. This could include U.S. and international space companies, SMEs, investors, universities, industry associations, international organizations, governments, and other institutions. Students will be encouraged to consider how successful public-private partnership models in technology and other emerging industries could be adapted to the international space sector. The project should ultimately provide UNVIE with a three-to-five-year partnership development roadmap that can be used to guide Project Constellation's growth, inform engagement with potential partners, and identify opportunities to expand the initiative beyond Vienna. A graduate student team will help UNVIE develop a practical partnership development strategy for Project Constellation. The project will build on a fall 2026 Diplomacy Lab project focused on developing the initiative's brand, marketing, communications, website, podcast, and audience strategy. The spring project will take the next step: how can Project Constellation translate its communications platform and growing network into sustained partnerships, commercial opportunities, and measurable engagement? Students will examine the space ecosystem from the perspective of potential partners and develop a framework for identifying, prioritizing, cultivating, and sustaining partnerships. This could include U.S. and international space companies, SMEs,

	investors, universities, industry associations, international organizations, governments, and other institutions. Students will be encouraged to consider how successful public-private partnership models in technology and other emerging industries could be adapted to the international space sector. The project should ultimately provide UNVIE with a three-to-five-year partnership development roadmap that can be used to guide Project Constellation's growth, inform engagement with potential partners, and identify opportunities to expand the initiative beyond Vienna.
Final Product Format	Final Product Format UNVIE seeks a practical, implementation-focused partnership strategy and roadmap, supported by research and actionable recommendations. The final product could include the following components: 1. Global Space Partnership Ecosystem Develop a framework for understanding the key stakeholders and partnership opportunities within the global space economy. Students could map relevant: - Governments and emerging space economies - U.S. and international commercial space companies - Small and medium-sized enterprises - Universities and research institutions - Venture capital and investment organizations - Industry associations and chambers of commerce - International organizations - Nonprofit and philanthropic organizations - Space policy and research institutions The analysis should identify where Project Constellation can provide unique value by connecting these communities with one another and with U.S. Government resources and expertise. 2. Partnership Development Model Develop a scalable model for how Project Constellation can identify and develop partnerships. Students should consider: - Types of partnerships Project Constellation should pursue - Value propositions for different partner categories - Approaches to initial outreach and relationship development - Potential partnership structures - Opportunities for sponsorship or cost-sharing - Roles for government, industry, academia, and nonprofit partners - Approaches for converting initial engagement into sustained partnerships - Measures of successful partnership development

	The goal is to create a framework that UNVIE can continue to use as the initiative expands. 3. Commercial Engagement Strategy Identify opportunities to use Project Constellation to strengthen connections between international partners and the U.S. commercial space sector. Students could examine opportunities involving: - U.S. space technology companies - Small and medium-sized enterprises - Satellite communications - Launch and transportation services - Low Earth orbit commercial activities - Satellite manufacturing - Space situational awareness - On-orbit servicing - Space stations - Lunar activities and emerging space markets - Space policy, legal, and regulatory expertise Students should identify practical approaches for helping international partners understand the capabilities and opportunities available through the U.S. commercial space ecosystem. 4. Emerging Space Economy Engagement Develop recommendations for how Project Constellation can expand access to the global space economy for emerging space economies. Students should consider how governments, universities, entrepreneurs, SMEs, and young professionals in emerging space economies could connect with: - U.S. companies and investors - Universities and research institutions - Space policy experts - Professional development opportunities - Technology and entrepreneurship networks - International space organizations - Other emerging space economies Students could identify several potential models for engagement and recommend approaches that could be scaled across regions. 5. Public-Private Partnership Case Studies Research successful U.S. and international public-private partnership models in space, technology, economic development, and other emerging sectors.
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	Students should identify lessons that could be applied to Project Constellation, including: - How partnerships were initiated - What incentives attracted private-sector participation - How government and private-sector roles were defined - How partnerships were funded - How organizations measured impact - How successful partnerships were expanded or replicated Particular attention could be given to partnership models that successfully connected government, industry, academia, and international stakeholders. 6. U.S. Embassy and Mission Network Develop recommendations for how Project Constellation can leverage the global network of U.S. Embassies and Missions to identify and showcase successful bilateral space partnerships. Students could develop a model for: - Identifying promising country-level partnerships - Connecting Embassies with Project Constellation - Sharing successful partnership models across posts - Identifying opportunities for U.S. commercial engagement - Developing country-level success stories - Feeding successful bilateral engagements into the Project Constellation digital platform and podcast This component should explore how a Vienna-based initiative can become a platform for showcasing U.S. space partnerships taking place around the world. 7. Partnership Pipeline and Prioritization Tool Develop a practical tool that UNVIE can use to manage Project Constellation's partnership pipeline. Potential fields could include: - Organization / country - Sector - Type of organization - Geographic focus - Space capability or area of expertise - Potential contribution - Potential benefit to the partner - Existing U.S. relationship - Partnership opportunity - Recommended engagement approach - Status of engagement - Next steps
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	Students could also develop a methodology for identifying opportunities that warrant additional engagement. 8. Three-to-Five-Year Partnership Roadmap Conclude with a phased roadmap for building Project Constellation into a sustained international partnership platform. The roadmap should identify: - Near-term opportunities - Medium-term partnership objectives - Potential flagship partnerships - Recommended stakeholder engagement - Resource considerations - Opportunities for scaling - Performance indicators and measures of success Students should identify several high-potential partnership concepts that UNVIE could pursue following completion of the Diplomacy Lab project. The final project should include a professional presentation summarizing the team's findings, recommended partnership model, priority opportunities, and implementation roadmap. Desired Student Profile This project would be particularly well suited for graduate students with interests or experience in international business, strategy, entrepreneurship, marketing, economic development, emerging technologies, public-private partnerships, or international relations. Students should be comfortable conducting independent research, analyzing complex stakeholder ecosystems, developing strategic recommendations, and translating research into practical tools and implementation plans. Experience with business strategy, market analysis, data visualization, stakeholder mapping, or emerging technology sectors would be particularly useful. Potential Research Questions Students may consider questions such as: - What makes a public-private partnership attractive to a commercial space company? - How can a U.S. Government initiative create value for both American companies and international partners? - What types of emerging space economies offer the greatest opportunities for commercial and institutional partnerships? - How can Project Constellation move from individual events to a sustained partnership ecosystem? - What can the United States learn from successful international technology and innovation partnership models?
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	How can U.S. Embassies and Missions contribute to a global partnership pipeline? What incentives can encourage U.S. SMEs to participate in international space partnerships? How can Project Constellation demonstrate measurable value to private-sector partners? How can partnerships initiated through the U.S. Space Forum be sustained throughout the year? What would it take for Project Constellation to become a recognizable platform for international space partnerships? The project should encourage students to think creatively about how the United States can connect American innovation with international opportunity while expanding access to the global space economy.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Public-Private Partnerships</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	711
Project Name	Opportunities to Combat Marine Debris Using U.S. Technology
Office	Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs
Embassy	
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Marine debris, including plastics, derelict fishing gear, fiberglass from old boats, and other waste entering the world's ocean waters and waterways, is a visible and rapidly worsening transboundary environmental challenge. It threatens marine biodiversity, disrupts coastal economies dependent on fishing and tourism, and degrades food security. Left unaddressed, marine debris will continue to strain diplomatic relationships in regions of transboundary pollution, weaken the resilience of coastal states already facing significant economic pressures, and erode public trust in the ability of governments and international partners to protect natural resources. This project offers an opportunity to strengthen the Department's understanding of how U.S. innovation and foreign assistance programs can be marshaled to address problems that touches nearly every region of the world by answering two core questions: what opportunities exist for U.S. companies to combat marine debris and how can foreign assistance funding be used most effectively to advance solutions. On the first question, students will identify U.S. firms offering technology including, but not limited to, debris-tracking systems, cleanup equipment, recycling and circular-economy solutions, and satellite or AI-based monitoring tools and technologies and assess where partner-country demand could translate into contracts, market access, and jobs for American businesses. On the second question, students will evaluate existing and potential foreign assistance mechanisms to recommend how limited program dollars can be prioritized and structured to generate the greatest impact, whether by seeding partner-country capacity, de-risking early engagement with U.S. providers, or targeting the geographic and programmatic areas of greatest need. The final product will provide a clear, evidence-based roadmap connecting American business opportunity with smart foreign assistance investment, demonstrating how U.S. leadership on combatting marine debris benefits the American people through new markets.
Final Product Format	Report that identifies what opportunities exist for U.S. companies to combat marine debris and how can foreign assistance funding be used more effectively to advance solutions. Presentation to DOS providing high level overview of results and recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Oceans</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	We are open to multiple teams if a team wants to focus on a specific geographic area or type of marine debris.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	712
Project Name	Reaching Brazilian Audiences: Platform Use, Messenger Trust, and Digital Engagement Strategy
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Brazil
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	How do generational differences in platform use (WhatsApp/Telegram versus Instagram/TikTok versus traditional broadcast and print media) shape which messengers and formats Brazilian audiences engage with and trust? As Brazil's information environment fragments across social media and traditional media, U.S. Mission Brazil's Public Diplomacy Section requires a clear understanding of these dynamics to allocate outreach resources effectively and design content that resonates with different generational audiences. This project asks the student team to develop audience segmentation, anchored in generational/platform use, cuts across regions, and to identify which messengers, formats, and platforms are most credible and effective for each segment. A central research question is which types of messengers (journalists, influencers, academics, religious leaders, and government officials) retain the most credibility with different Brazilian audiences, and through which platforms and formats they are most effectively reached. Understanding who Brazilians trust to relay information is directly useful for the Mission's messenger selection across a range of policy topics. The team is encouraged to propose its own analytical framework and methodology, potentially drawing on existing datasets, supplemented by original survey or interview data where feasible. Why this project will be useful: The research will help U.S. Mission Brazil determine where to prioritize limited public diplomacy resources, which audiences to target, which messengers to engage, and which platforms and content formats are most effective for reaching specific audiences. The final product would give the Mission a data-driven foundation for public diplomacy planning and audience engagement, including: Audience personas segmented by generation and region, each with recommended messengers, formats, and platforms, usable directly by PD officers designing campaigns. A credibility map showing which types of sources (government, media, influencers, academics, religious leaders) different audience segments trust, useful for messenger selection across a range of policy topics. Platform-specific engagement guidance (e.g., WhatsApp group dynamics, Instagram/TikTok short-form content, YouTube long-form video, traditional broadcast/print), useful for the Mission's content strategy across its social and traditional media channels. Together, these deliverables would support more effective, data-informed decisions on audience engagement and could be presented directly to Mission leadership to guide public diplomacy strategy.
Final Product Format	Research report with an executive summary, including: (1) audience personas segmented by generation and region, each with recommended messengers/formats/platforms;

	(2) a credibility map showing which source types (government, media, influencers, academics, religious leaders) different segments trust; (3) platform-specific engagement guidance (e.g., WhatsApp dynamics, short-form video, long-form video, traditional media); and (4) practical, actionable recommendations for PD officers on audience prioritization, messenger selection, and platform strategy. The team should also prepare a summary presentation of key findings and recommendations for Mission leadership.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Additional Information	The project is intended to be completed within one academic semester. Students may draw on existing academic literature, public opinion surveys, and publicly available datasets on Brazilian media and audience behavior, and may incorporate original data collection (such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups) where feasible and appropriate. The final research approach and methodology would be developed in consultation with the faculty lead and U.S. Mission Brazil at the beginning of the semester of 2027. The project could be of interest to students and faculty in communications, political science, public policy, sociology, statistics, and digital media. U.S. Mission Brazil would be available to provide subject-matter context and feedback throughout the semester.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	713
Project Name	Turning the Tide: A Commercial and Diplomatic Framework for Sargassum Management and Use
Office	Ocean and Polar Affairs
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Sargassum inundation events (SIEs) have become a recurring problem in the Caribbean since 2011, with massive blooms from the Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt washing ashore across the Caribbean, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Gulf of America, disrupting tourism and fisheries and creating costly cleanup and disposal challenges. The problem is increasingly severe, with 2026 bringing record levels in the Caribbean and Gulf. Decomposing seaweed can degrade coastal ecosystems and water quality and release hydrogen sulfide and ammonia that pose public health concerns. Managing SIEs currently presents a headache, yet it potentially could be leveraged into a business opportunity. Developing scalable systems that can harvest, process, and convert sargassum into valuable products would transform a costly coastal waste stream into a revenue-generating resource while reducing cleanup and disposal costs for affected communities. Because Sargassum affects both U.S. and Caribbean nations, there is an opportunity to jointly solve this issue through combined commercial and diplomatic approaches. We seek a project that explores the following questions: What technological and regulatory conditions would be required to transform Sargassum from a coastal waste problem into a commercially valuable marine resource? What is the current state of play for commercial Sargassum applications, both in the U.S. and Caribbean nations? What business models could support commercially sustainable Sargassum collection, processing, or valorization? Who are the potential paying customers? Under what conditions could Sargassum-related technologies support a viable regional industry rather than a collection of small, locally focused projects? How could international cooperation and industry partnerships accelerate the development and deployment of marine technologies for Sargassum collection, processing, or valorization that benefit both U.S. and Caribbean nations?
Final Product Format	We seek a report that answers these questions, particularly focused on the final question about where international cooperation could accelerate Sargassum solutions and provide policy recommendations for the State Department. The report should include an executive summary. We also request a presentation to DOS providing a high level overview of results and recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Oceans</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	714
Project Name	Blue Tech Diplomacy: Marine Technology Partnerships for Developing Coastal States
Office	Ocean and Polar Affairs
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	The ocean economy is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world, yet marine technology innovation is not being deployed to the full extent of its potential. Advanced economies like the United States are rapidly developing advanced tools – autonomous vessels, ocean monitoring systems, aquaculture technologies, maritime domain awareness platforms, and more – while small island developing states (SIDS) and developing coastal nations often lack the capital, regulatory frameworks, and technical capacity to adopt, adapt, or benefit from these innovations. This gap represents both a development challenge and a foreign policy opportunity: the countries most dependent on healthy, productive ocean waters are frequently the least equipped to use technological innovation to manage them. This project asks whether and how marine technology partnerships can serve as a vehicle for economic development in small island and developing coastal states, without replicating the dependency dynamics that have undermined past technology-transfer efforts. Students will assess which marine technologies offer the greatest development impact per dollar of international assistance, which business and partnership models best support local capacity building, which policy levers available to foreign affairs agencies – including trade policy, foreign direct investment promotion, commercial diplomacy, and international science and technology agreements – can be deployed to greatest effect to achieve technology deployment, and what role the U.S. Department of State and likeminded governments should play in helping domestic firms capture emerging opportunities in global marine technology markets. The project will produce actionable recommendations for policymakers seeking to advance both U.S. economic interests and the economic development of partner nations through ocean technology diplomacy.
Final Product Format	We seek a report that answers these questions, particularly focused on the role that State and likeminded governments should play and provide policy recommendations. The report should include an executive summary. We also request a presentation to DOS providing a high level overview of results and recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	715
Project Name	Quad Horizons: Charting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific to 2047
Office	India and Bhutan
Bureau	South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)
Project Description	This project asks student teams to build a tri-horizon forecasting model — 2032, 2037, and 2047 — that maps the trajectory of the Quad as a pillar of a free and open Indo-Pacific. At each marker, students will identify probable friction points (supply chain resilience, maritime security, disinformation, and PRC coercive economic statecraft), structural opportunities (critical minerals cooperation, digital infrastructure, development financing), and a roadmap for success. The deliverable — likely a presentation with a series of policy memos, planning tools, and recommended Quad deliverables — will give the Department a forward-looking, academically rigorous resource to inform Quad Leaders' and Foreign Ministers' engagements over the next two decades, ensuring U.S. planning stays ahead of the curve.
Final Product Format	Presentation and 3 policy memos
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>South/Central Asian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	716
Project Name	Breaking Chains: A U.S.-India Blueprint to End Human Trafficking
Office	India and Bhutan
Bureau	South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)
Project Description	India faces one of the largest human trafficking burdens in the world: the Global Slavery Index has estimated that more than 11 million people in India live in conditions of modern slavery — the highest absolute number of any country globally — driven largely by intergenerational debt bondage in brick kilns, agriculture, mining, and textile production, alongside significant intra-country trafficking of women and children from poorer eastern states into domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation, and exploitative labor in wealthier urban centers. This project invites students to design a practical, bilaterally implementable action plan — spanning law enforcement cooperation, survivor reintegration support, private-sector supply chain accountability, and public awareness campaigns — that the U.S. and Indian governments could pursue jointly. The final product, envisioned as a policy roadmap with a companion advocacy toolkit, would give post and DRL/TIP a concrete framework to press for measurable, cooperative progress on a persistent challenge.
Final Product Format	Presentation and Action Plan for policy implementation
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Trafficking in Persons</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>South/Central Asian Studies</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	717
Project Name	Anchoring the Thunder Dragon: Securing a U.S.-Bhutan Partnership for the Next Generation
Office	India and Bhutan
Bureau	South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)
Project Description	Bhutan stands at an inflection point. The launch of the Gelephu Mindfulness City — a planned special administrative region designed to transform Bhutan's economy through sustainable development, finance, and tourism — will reshape the kingdom's global orientation just as Beijing intensifies its own outreach along the disputed Bhutan-China border and through economic overtures. This project challenges students to develop a concrete engagement strategy for how the United States can position itself as Bhutan's partner of choice: from expanding people-to-people ties and educational exchanges, to identifying targeted U.S. private-sector and development finance opportunities tied to the Gelephu project, to crafting quiet diplomatic and security cooperation that respects Bhutan's traditional non-alignment while reinforcing its democratic trajectory. The deliverable — a strategic engagement plan with prioritized, sequenced recommendations — would give the Department a forward-leaning tool to strengthen ties with a strategically located Himalayan partner before regional competitors lock-in influence.
Final Product Format	Presentation and Policy Memos/ Action Plan
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>South/Central Asian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	718
Project Name	The Next Fifty Years: Mapping the U.S.-India Partnership to 2076
Office	India & Bhutan
Bureau	South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)
Project Description	As the world's oldest and largest democracies, the United States and India have built a relationship spanning defense, technology, trade, and people-to-people ties — but the next half-century will test that partnership against demographic shifts, AI and critical technology competition, a more multipolar global order, and an array of unknown phenomena that lie ahead of us. This project invites students to produce a long-horizon forecast identifying the top structural obstacles (e.g., divergent non-alignment traditions, trade friction, differing approaches to Russia and the Global South) and the highest-value opportunities (defense co-production, semiconductor and AI cooperation, energy development, higher education partnerships) likely to define the relationship through 2076. The final deliverable — envisioned as a "50-Year Outlook" report with decade-by-decade milestones — would give the Department a rigorous, academically sourced reference point for embassy and bureau strategic planning, ensuring U.S. India policy is built for durability.
Final Product Format	Presentation and Policy Memos
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>South/Central Asian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	719
Project Name	Assessing U.S.-Indian Commercial Critical Minerals Opportunities
Office	India and Bhutan
Bureau	South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)
Project Description	President Trump said on August 7 that “critical minerals are the raw materials of American strength that power everything from advanced weaponry to automobiles.” Currently, critical mineral supply chains are a choke point dominated by one country, impacting U.S. industrial resilience. The Administration is rebuilding America’s critical minerals capacity with a multi-prong strategy, including through partnerships with like-minded countries. This student group will analyze mineral-processing opportunities in India, assessing market demand, resource availability, processing and value-chain gaps, regulatory and policy considerations, infrastructure and investment requirements, competitive dynamics, and potential partnership models. Based on this analysis, the students will develop a compelling business case for U.S. companies, identifying the most attractive processing opportunities, assessing their commercial potential, risks, investment requirements, and expected returns. The students will provide recommendations on potential U.S. investments and partnerships in India.
Final Product Format	Presentation, Roadmap
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Energy Security</i>
Additional Information	Project well suited to a MBA or dedicated minerals programs like the Colorado College of Mines which could harness a good blend of business and geological assessments.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	720
Project Name	English for Hemispheric Security: Identifying Brazil's Priority Language Needs for Countering Transnational Criminal Organizations
Office	Office of English Language Programs, Regional English Language Office Brasilia
Embassy	Brazil
Bureau	Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Project Description	Brazil's size, extensive land and maritime borders, major ports and airports, and position within regional and global narcotics routes create significant challenges for efforts to counter cartels and transnational criminal organizations. These networks operate across jurisdictions and increasingly depend on international financial, logistical, technological, and digital connections. Brazilian law-enforcement and justice-sector professionals must access international research and training, communicate with foreign counterparts, participate in multinational professional networks, and interpret cross-border information, which are all activities that can require professional English language proficiency. An English for Specific Purposes curriculum has already been developed for the Brazilian Federal Police in four areas: Intelligence, International Cooperation, Dignitary Protection, and Counter-Narcotics. Because this Diplomacy Lab project is specifically concerned with countering narcotics trafficking and transnational criminal organizations, its analysis would focus on the three most directly relevant curriculum areas: Intelligence, International Cooperation, and Counter-Narcotics. Student teams would conduct a strategic needs-and-audience analysis to determine where English-language limitations most constrain Brazil's ability to counter narcotics trafficking and transnational criminal organizations. The central research questions are: • Which professional functions require the greatest English-language support? • Which federal, state, or other institutional audiences should be prioritized? • Which geographic regions and institutional hubs present the most consequential needs? • How well do the three relevant curriculum areas correspond to those needs? • Are additional professional functions or audiences equally or more important?
Final Product Format	Each team should produce a research report of approximately 15–20 pages, including a two-page executive summary and actionable findings. The combined products should provide: • A strategic professional English-language needs assessment; • A prioritized analysis of professional audiences and institutions; • A geographic and institutional map of potential needs; • An analysis of how the three relevant curriculum areas correspond to the needs identified; • An audience-prioritization matrix or scorecard; and • Evidence-based recommendations identifying where future English-language support would offer the greatest value. The final products should identify the priority needs, audiences, institutions, and locations. Maps, charts, comparative matrices, and other data visualizations are strongly encouraged. Final Product Suggestions

	Track 1: Professional English Needs • A 15–20-page professional needs assessment; • A gap analysis identifying where insufficient English capacity creates the most consequential professional limitations; • A comparative review of professional English needs in similar international law-enforcement contexts; • An analysis of how Intelligence, International Cooperation, and Counter-Narcotics correspond to the identified needs; and • A two-page executive summary identifying the most significant findings. Track 2: Priority Audiences and Institutions • A prioritized list of Brazilian professional audiences and institutions; • A transparent prioritization methodology; • An audience matrix or scorecard comparing professional role, English need, international engagement, institutional reach, and relevance to counter-narcotics or transnational-crime efforts; • Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 audience recommendations; • A stakeholder map showing relationships among relevant institutions; and • An explanation of evidence limitations and areas requiring further inquiry. Track 3: Geographic Exposure and Curriculum Alignment • A geographic analysis of where professional English support may be most consequential; • Maps or visualizations showing relevant border regions, ports, airports, investigative hubs, and international-cooperation centers using only publicly available information; • A matrix comparing the three relevant curriculum areas with the audiences, professional functions, and locations identified through the research; • Identification of professional functions or audiences not adequately reflected in the existing curriculum; • Recommendations for future areas of inquiry; and • A concise set of findings to inform subsequent decisions by the Embassy, RELO, RSO, and Brazilian partner institutions. Common Final Synthesis The three teams’ findings should be synthesized into a concise strategic framework answering five questions: 1. Where do Brazilian law-enforcement and justice-sector professionals most need additional English-language support to counter narcotics trafficking and transnational criminal organizations? 2. Which professional audiences and institutions should be prioritized? 3. Which geographic regions or institutional hubs present the most consequential needs? 4. How well do the three relevant Federal Police curriculum areas correspond to those needs? 5. What evidence gaps should be addressed before future English-language programming decisions are made? Research and Ethical Considerations The project should rely on publicly available information, academic literature, voluntary interviews, non-sensitive curriculum materials, and institutionally approved sources. Any interviews or surveys should comply with applicable university requirements for informed consent and human-subject research.
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	Its purpose is to determine where professional English capacity could most effectively support international communication, access to specialized knowledge, and institutional cooperation within Brazil's broader response to transnational crime.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	Three teams, one per research track.
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	721
Project Name	Addressing National Security Challenges: How non-state actors acquire Chinese conventional weapons, despite the PRC's official policy.
Office	Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement
Embassy	
Bureau	Political-Military Affairs (PM)
Project Description	This project will help address a growing national security challenge: the gap between the Chinese government's claim it is a "responsible weapons exporter" and the reality of Chinese-designed and produced conventional weapons –including man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS)—increasingly appearing in the hands of non-state actor groups that threaten the United States. Recent reports of Iran's plans to acquire Chinese MANPADS combined with Small Arms Survey's independent reports (see links below) point to an increasing prevalence of Chinese designed or produced MANPADS in conflict zones and in the hands of non-state actors. With little evidence of Chinese post-export monitoring or control, these trends directly contradict the PRC's November 2025 white paper on arms control, which states China takes a "prudent and responsible approach to arms trade". This trend threatens U.S. citizens, U.S. military interests, aviation security, and global security. This project offers an opportunity for students to: (1) research and analyze Chinese policy statements related to the arms trade; (2) summarize how the Chinese government oversees weapons manufacturers that export conventional weapons (including MANPADS) to end user states; (3) identify ways the Chinese government could improve its management of military exports in line with international norms and standards; (4) use social media and open source research to identify examples where Chinese-designed or -produced weapons appear to be used/located with actors that are "undermining the peace, security, and stability of the region." This research and its findings will inform and support U.S. government efforts to protect and secure U.S. citizens and commercial interests, safeguard civilian aviation, and encourage foreign countries to manage weapons acquisition and trade responsibly-advancing core U.S. security priorities in an era of strategic competition.
Final Product Format	Extensive research paper including: -Description and analysis of Chinese government conventional weapon export policy and practice (Mandarin-language capability is helpful) -Examples of Chinese designed or produced conventional weapons (including MANPADS and ATGMs) in Europe, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, East Asia and Pacific, and Western Hemisphere. Two-page executive summary Relevant graphics and/or images The final product(s) will be used in public and private engagements to inform foreign governments about U.S. concerns and encourage action.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arms Control/Non-Proliferation</i>

Additional Information	https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/index.php/resource/arsenal-upgrades-manpads-rsf-and-war-sudan https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/wjbxw/202511/t20251127_11761653.html https://www.cnn.com/2026/04/11/politics/us-intelligence-iran-china-weapons https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/13/us/politics/china-iran-weapons-trump-xi.html https://www.reuters.com/world/china/iran-get-chinese-shoulder-launched-missile-systems-weeks-sources-say-2026-07-29/
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	722
Project Name	Restoring Food Security in Conflict Zones: Decontamination and Irrigation Rebuilding
Office	Office of International Food and Nutrition
Bureau	Global Food Security (GFS)
Project Description	Agricultural rehabilitation in post-conflict zones is critical to restoring local livelihoods and food systems, but it often requires large and targeted investments. Unexploded ordinance can pose a direct safety threat to farmers and civilians, in addition to leaching toxic chemicals into soil and water that are then taken up into crops. Because restoring these breadbasket regions is critical to stabilizing global agricultural markets, preventing food insecurity, and protecting rural livelihoods, this intersection of agriculture, environmental health, engineering, and finance represents a vital arena for U.S. diplomacy. This project will explore and propose approaches to both financing and implementing post-conflict agricultural recovery, for example, through demining efforts, irrigation rehabilitation, large-scale environmental decontamination, and other agricultural infrastructure rebuilding. Students will examine case studies of soil and water contamination, and analyze how development finance and other innovative models can fund economically viable and lasting reconstruction efforts. Ultimately, students will develop clear policy guidelines and practical recommendations for the USG, affected countries, and partners to restore agricultural productivity and food security.
Final Product Format	An 8-10 page paper, with a presentation
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Food Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	723
Project Name	International Travel in the AI Era
Office	Public and Congressional Affairs
Bureau	Consular Affairs (CA)
Project Description	How people find and evaluate information online is changing as generative Artificial Intelligence chat interfaces like ChatGPT or Google's "AI mode" go mainstream. We want to know if these products provide travel.state.gov's accurate and authoritative information when asked popular passport and travel safety questions. Are travelers likely to use or avoid these tools to perform pre-travel research, such as finding out how to apply for a passport or researching their travel destination? Are certain customers more or less likely to rely on these tools and when they do use them, do they trust the info without question or do they verify what they are being told using other non AI-generated sources? As travel information enters the AI Era, help us understand what tools travelers use for trip planning so we can ensure travel.state.gov, one of the government's most-visited websites, doesn't get left behind.
Final Product Format	This research project could take many forms, as long as it results in an assessment of how customers currently find international travel info and whether that process is changing with the development of generative AI chat-like interfaces or other new technologies. This project could examine this question via a variety of research methodologies and could give students hands-on experience conducting their own original research studies, if desired.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Additional Information	Travel.state.gov has Travel Advisories and guidance for every country worldwide. This information for American travelers explains the most important safety concerns in their international destination, as well as practical information about local laws, entry/exit requirements, how to access health services, and safe transportation tips. Around half of the travel.state.gov website visitors come via a search engine, and the share of visitors coming from AI generative engines has increase more than 225% over the last 12 months. Examples of AI-enabled chat: see https://bard.google.com/chat and Copilot with GPT-4 (bing.com): Relevant TSG website: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html Learn About Your Destination (state.gov)
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	725
Project Name	An Integrated Monitoring Framework for Anti-Diversion Auditing and Real-Time Impact Reporting in Support of GHSD
Office	Foreign Assistance Hub
Embassy	Senegal
Bureau	Global Health Security and Diplomacy (GHSD)
Project Description	Design an integrated monitoring framework that combines anti-diversion auditing with real-time impact reporting for U.S. bilateral health assistance, in support of GHSD priorities. The framework should use last-mile digital tools (e.g., supply chain tracking, community diagnostics) to detect diversion, while feeding real-time surveillance and supply data into quarterly steering committee dashboards.
Final Product Format	A presentation
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Global Health</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	726
Project Name	Advancing Digital Health Transformation to Strengthen Primary Health Care, HIV/Malaria Programs, and Outbreak Response in Senegal
Office	Foreign Assistance Hub
Embassy	Senegal
Bureau	Global Health Security and Diplomacy (GHSD)
Project Description	This proposal would explore how digital health transformation can be adapted to strengthen the quality and reach of health services in Senegal, with a focus on three priority areas: primary health care delivery, HIV/Malaria program management, and outbreak/epidemic surveillance and response. Students would research digital health interventions such as electronic health records, mobile diagnostics, telemedicine, and integrated disease surveillance platforms. Then develop recommendations for how these tools can support Senegal's health system modernization goals in coordination with U.S. bilateral assistance programs.
Final Product Format	20 page research paper
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Global Health</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	727
Project Name	Mapping China's Cultural Heritage Diplomacy: Open-Source Tools for Global Insights
Office	Cultural Heritage Center
Bureau	Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Project Description	The U.S. Department of State's Cultural Heritage Center seeks a Diplomacy Lab team with expertise in data science and artificial intelligence to analyze publicly available sources and map China's growing engagement in global cultural heritage. This engagement includes archaeological research, cultural heritage preservation and protection programs, and museum exchanges conducted in partnership with Chinese research institutes and universities. The team will also track China's participation in cultural heritage-focused regional and multilateral bodies and thematic fora, such as the Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance, as well as the growing influence of Chinese scholarly research in these areas. Our goal is to better understand how these efforts compare with, and overlap with, comparable cultural heritage activities of American institutions and researchers. The Diplomacy Lab team will develop a system, using AI-assisted tools, to analyze this large volume of fragmented information and establish a resource-efficient process for continuously monitoring China's cultural heritage activities worldwide. This work will support the Department's efforts to identify gaps in U.S. engagement, opportunities for partnership, areas where U.S. institutions have comparative advantages, or countries/regions where Chinese engagement is expanding.
Final Product Format	The Diplomacy Lab team will develop a resource-efficient, replicable method for the routine monitoring and analysis of China's global cultural heritage engagement. This method should leverage open-source data, AI-assisted tools, and statistical analysis to regularly track China's activities across archaeological research, heritage preservation and protection, museum exchanges, and participation in multilateral and thematic fora. The final product will include an initial report and measurable, visual data products highlighting the geographic distribution of China's activities, programs, and initiatives, and identifying overlap with U.S.-based institutions, researchers, and programs. Together, these products should provide a foundation for continued monitoring and analysis, enabling more strategic use of resources, and helping inform resource allocation in the field.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	728
Project Name	Mapping the Minerals Beneath the Waste: Laying the Groundwork for an Investor-Grade Tailings Inventory for Central Asia
Office	Regional Environment, Science, Technology and Health Office
Embassy	Kazakhstan
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Somewhere beneath Central Asia's mountains lie millions of tons of ""waste"" – old mine tailings from Soviet-era gold, copper, and uranium operations – that may hold the rare earths, antimony, gallium, and tungsten the world desperately needs. China currently dominates 70-90% of global critical minerals processing, and Central Asian governments want to diversify their partnerships away from Moscow and Beijing. U.S. companies want in, but nobody has yet built the map that shows where the real opportunity lies. This project puts students in the pilot seat of that problem: using free, publicly available satellite data (Sentinel-1 SAR, Sentinel-2 multispectral, Landsat) and cloud-based tools like Google Earth Engine, students will identify, classify, and rank tailings storage facilities across the region, flagging which sites show the strongest signals for economically recoverable critical minerals and which pose environmental or structural risk. Students will gain hands-on experience with the same remote sensing techniques: – spectral indices, radar deformation analysis – used by industry and national security analysts to assess resources and infrastructure risk from space, with no fieldwork required, just a laptop and cloud compute. They'll learn to turn raw geospatial data into a decision-ready product that a U.S. company, investor, or diplomat could actually use, building a portfolio-ready deliverable valued by employers in energy, defense, environmental consulting, and intelligence. More importantly, they'll contribute directly to U.S. economic statecraft and supply chain security – this is the desk-based groundwork that professional researchers can then use to achieve a real U.S. government objective: building the first "Investor-Grade" tailings inventory for a region that could reshape the critical minerals supply chain for the next decade.
Final Product Format	Students will produce two core deliverables: (1) an interactive/exportable map product (e.g., a Google Earth Engine dashboard or GIS shapefile package) covering the top 20-30 highest-potential tailings storage facilities in Central Asia (initial focus: Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan), and (2) a short methodology report explaining the data sources and analytical approach.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Geography</i>
Additional Information	Initial focus will be on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, but the countries could be expanded to include the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and/or Turkmenistan. Astana is 9 hours ahead of DC in summer and 10 hours ahead, in winter. As such, students and professor should be prepared for check-ins that are early enough (or late enough) to effectively accommodate this time zone difference.
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	729
Project Name	Building the Bridge: Mapping Central Asia's Critical Minerals Partner Network
Office	Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Office
Embassy	Kazakhstan
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	U.S. companies interested in recovering critical minerals from Central Asia's mine tailings face a quiet but persistent obstacle: they don't know who to call. The region lacks a vetted directory of local engineering firms, environmental consultancies, and academic institutions that meet international compliance standards (FCPA, ESG) and possess the technical expertise – from hydrometallurgy to geotechnical assessment – needed to support tailings reprocessing projects. Without this local knowledge, American firms face higher risk, slower entry, and a steeper learning curve than competitors who already have established relationships on the ground. This project asks students to close that gap: researching, vetting, and compiling a directory of credible technical partners across Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan who could plausibly support U.S. companies entering this sector. Students will develop skills directly transferable to careers in international business, economic diplomacy, and risk consulting: conducting structured open-source research and due diligence, evaluating foreign firms and institutions against international regulatory and technical standards, and synthesizing findings into a usable business intelligence product. Beyond the resume-building value, students will be doing work that matters – this directory would directly de-risk U.S. investment in a strategically vital sector, strengthening America's position in the global race to secure critical mineral supply chains away from Chinese and Russian dominance, and supporting host governments' own interest in attracting stable, technology-rich Western partners.
Final Product Format	Students will produce a vetted partner database: a structured, searchable directory of Central Asian engineering firms, environmental consultancies, and academic/research institutions relevant to critical minerals recovery from mine tailings.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	Key disciplines include business/commercial analytical skills. Astana is 9 hours ahead of DC in summer and 10 hours ahead, in winter. Professor and students should be able to commit to check-ins with posts that are early enough (or late enough) to reasonably accommodate this time zone difference.
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	730
Project Name	Strengthening U.S. Supply Chain Resilience: Mapping Regulatory Hurdles for Critical Minerals in Central Asia
Office	Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Office
Embassy	Kazakhstan
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Reliable access to critical minerals is an urgent priority for U.S. economic and national security. Central Asia holds substantial, underutilized deposits of the high-tech materials essential for defense, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing. However, fragmented regulatory environments, inconsistent customs protocols, and ambiguous land-use policies currently deter U.S. investment and limit the ability of American industry to integrate these reliable, non-adversarial sources into our supply chains. This project challenges students to identify the specific "regulatory friction" that keeps U.S. companies from effectively engaging in Central Asian mineral markets. By analyzing the legislative frameworks in key partner nations—specifically focusing on the legal hurdles for cross-border transit and mining-site access—you will help identify where U.S. diplomatic engagement can most effectively clear the path for commercial integration. Your research will provide actionable insights into the administrative bottlenecks that U.S. diplomats should address to facilitate a more secure and resilient supply chain.
Final Product Format	Case Study Vignette: A one-page ""day-in-the-life"" scenario of a U.S. firm attempting to move mineral product through the region, illustrating the real-world impact of the regulations identified in the research. The "Market Access" Comparison Matrix: A concise, clear spreadsheet/table identifying the top three regulatory disparities (e.g., customs procedures, mineral rights, or transit licensing) for two selected Central Asian countries (e.g., Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) that most directly impact foreign investment. "Bottleneck" Briefing Memo: A 6–8 page strategic analysis of one specific administrative bottleneck (e.g., "The customs-transit interface on the Trans-Caspian route") that currently inhibits industrial cooperation, including a brief summary of how it impacts U.S. strategic interests.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	Astana is 9 hours ahead of DC in the summertime, and 10 hours ahead in winter. Professors and students should be able to commit to check-ins with posts early enough (or late enough) to reasonably accommodate this time difference.
Suggested Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	731
Project Name	Tunisia's Data Ecosystem: Mapping Where Data Lives, Who Controls It, and What It Means for AI Readiness
Office	Economics
Embassy	Tunisia
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	Over the past 18 months, Tunisia has moved decisively to build an AI-powered digital economy. It became the first country in the region to launch 5G, brought a new submarine internet cable online connecting it to Europe, announced a 2026–2030 National AI Strategy, and launched 114 government digital transformation projects. Tunisian Prime Minister Zaafarani recently described AI as “a key driver of economic and social transformation.” However, these ambitions depend on a foundation Tunisia is still developing: an ecosystem where data is accessible, interoperable, and well-governed. Currently, there is a divergence between the infrastructure underpinning Tunisia's digital aspirations and the digital platforms its citizens actively use today. To realize its AI goals, Tunisia must build a cohesive national data strategy that pairs clear inter-ministerial data-sharing protocols with balanced data protection laws designed to nurture its robust startup ecosystem. This project proposes open-source research to identify: • Where Tunisia’s commercially and governmentally significant data resides. • The regulatory and institutional gaps preventing this data from being AI-ready. • The minimum viable data governance framework required to unlock Tunisia's AI potential.
Final Product Format	The research team should produce three core products and a final briefing: 1. A sector-by-sector matrix (telecom, health, energy, agriculture, finance, government) mapping where Tunisia’s significant data sits, which vendors control the underlying infrastructure, and where interoperability gaps exist. 2. A regulatory benchmark comparing Tunisia’s data governance framework against comparator countries at similar stages of digital development, identifying the minimum viable regulatory package needed to make Tunisia’s data AI-ready. 3. A synthesis of the above into recommendations for Embassy engagement on trusted technology, U.S. commercial positioning, and digital economy programming. 4. A virtual presentation of findings to Embassy Tunis staff at the end of the semester.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	Project Objectives • Systematically map where Tunisia’s commercially and governmentally significant data resides. • Catalogue existing legal and regulatory frameworks that govern data management. • Identify the regulatory and institutional gaps preventing data from being AI-ready. Potential Impact The timing is critical: Tunisia is currently shaping its data governance framework. A personal data protection law is before Parliament, the AI strategy is being drafted, and infrastructure contracts are being finalized that will dictate data flows for decades. This

	project will provide the Embassy with the analytical baseline to advocate for trusted technology, position U.S. cloud and AI companies competitively, and engage in regulatory debates that can unleash Tunisia’s AI potential.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	732
Project Name	Identifying U.S. Agricultural Products Suitable for the Ugandan Market
Office	Econ
Embassy	Uganda
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	East Africa's food demand is projected to nearly double by 2050. With abundant rainfall and a bimodal growing season, Uganda can expand its role as East Africa's breadbasket and provide net food security if the government achieves its agro-industrialization targets. Uganda's agricultural sector remains the backbone of its economy, employing roughly 70% of the workforce and contributing approximately a quarter of GDP. Agro-industrialization serves as a foundational pillar in Uganda's ambitious ten-fold growth strategy. While Uganda produces much of its own food, it still imports items like wheat, vegetable oils, and processed foods to round out domestic supply and meet consumer preferences. U.S. agricultural exports can accelerate agro-industrialization but have remain limited, partly due to shipping costs, tariffs, and a lack of economies of scale that tend to favor lower-cost competitors, even in categories where U.S. goods may offer better quality or reliability. Additionally Ugandan law prohibits GMOs beyond controlled field trials. As a result, U.S.-Uganda agricultural trade has stayed concentrated in niche, higher-value products rather than the bulk commodities that dominate Uganda's import basket. While politics and price sensitivity play a role in limiting U.S. agricultural exports to Uganda, are there additional U.S. products that would be competitive in the Ugandan agricultural market? For example, could Uganda import corn-based livestock feed from the U.S. at a cheaper price than the Middle East given our abundant supply? Are there enough medium-to-large scale farming operations that warrant increasing the market share of U.S. brand large-scale equipment? Did past controlled field trials of GMOs open up space to promote a limited set of GMO seed exports and crops? As the U.S. increases its exports of bovine genetics, are there opportunities for export to Uganda? U.S. Embassy Uganda seeks to identify five to 10 agricultural products suitable for the Ugandan market, including analysis of how the projected sales price in Uganda remains competitive with traditional suppliers. This presents a significant opportunity to contribute to regional food security and generate durable U.S. export revenues, support thousands of U.S. jobs, increase U.S. influence, and strengthen the U.S.-Uganda relationship.
Final Product Format	Consulting presentation and report
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Food Security</i>
Suggested Academic Level	Any

Project ID	733
Project Name	Mapping and Countering Chinese Technological Influence in Venezuela: Implications for U.S. "Displacing Adversaries" Strategy
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Venezuela
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	Venezuela stands at an inflection point. As the country moves through the U.S. government's three-phase approach: Stabilization, Recovery and Reconciliation, and Democratic Transition, the choices Venezuela makes about technological and telecommunications infrastructure will shape its strategic orientation for future generations. Over the past decade, Chinese state-linked companies, including ZTE, Huawei, and CEIEC, built deep footholds in Venezuela's telecommunications backbone, national identification systems (including the "Fatherland Card" biometric platform), surveillance networks, and state media infrastructure. As U.S. Embassy Caracas resumes full operations after a seven-year suspension and re-engages Venezuelan civil society, government counterparts, and the private sector, understanding the scope, mechanics, and durability of this Chinese technological footprint is essential to informing the Department's "Displacing Adversaries" priority under the current U.S.-Venezuela policy framework. This project asks a faculty-led student team to research and map the extent of Chinese technology involvement in Venezuela spanning telecommunications infrastructure, surveillance and biometric systems, e-governance platforms, and digital media, and to assess how this footprint may affect Venezuela's ability to pursue open, transparent, and market-driven digital modernization during the Recovery and Democratic Transition phases. Students would examine questions such as: 1. How embedded are Chinese-built systems in Venezuela's state architecture, and what would be the technical, financial, and political costs of transitioning toward U.S. or allied-country technology alternatives? 2. What historical precedents exist from other countries (e.g., in the Western Hemisphere or Eastern Europe) that have successfully "displaced" adversarial digital infrastructure in favor of trusted-vendor alternatives? 3. What openings exist for U.S. and allied private-sector technology companies, consistent with the Department's "Trade, Not Aid" and "Hemisphere First" principles, to offer competitive, rights-respecting alternatives as Venezuela rebuilds? The findings from this project would directly inform Embassy Caracas's economic and public diplomacy engagement strategy, including outreach to Venezuelan private-sector leaders, regional business chambers (such as those in Carabobo and other industrial states), and potential U.S. technology-sector partners interested in Venezuela's eventual reconstruction market. This is a timely and high-visibility opportunity for students to contribute original, policy-relevant research at the intersection of technology, great-power competition, and hemispheric affairs with direct application to an active U.S. foreign policy priority.
Final Product Format	Given the flexibility of the Diplomacy Lab format, the faculty team could tailor deliverables to their discipline and course structure. Possible outputs include: • A mapped inventory/database of known Chinese technology deployments in Venezuela (telecom, surveillance, e-governance, media) • A comparative case-study analysis of other countries that transitioned away from Chinese-built digital infrastructure

	• Policy recommendations/briefing memo for Embassy Caracas on engagement opportunities with U.S./allied tech firms • A public-facing (unclassified) explainer or interactive visualization suitable for outreach to Venezuelan audiences on digital sovereignty and infrastructure choices • Draft talking points or FAQ materials the Econ/Public Affairs Section could adapt for use with private-sector or chamber-of-commerce audiences
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	This project provides Embassy Caracas with evidence based on the scope of Chinese digital influence to inform counter-engagement strategy, identifies openings for U.S./allied private-sector technology firms as trusted alternatives, and frames findings within broader regional patterns of Chinese technological expansion in Latin America. The Travel Advisory reduction from Level 4 to Level 3, and the resumption of full Embassy Caracas operations enable deeper in-country engagement with Venezuelan private-sector and civil-society stakeholders on digital and economic modernization issues.
Suggested Academic Level	Any

