The Center for International Studies (CIS) supports and promotes international research and education at MIT.

CIS includes 120 members of the MIT faculty and staff, mainly drawn from the departments of Political Science and Urban Studies and Planning, and visiting scholars from around the world. We sponsor formal programs, multidisciplinary working groups and numerous public events. While CIS does not offer courses, students engage with the center’s faculty and staff as colleagues in research, dissertation students, participants in a range of events, and interns in the MIT Science and Technology Initiative (MISTI), the groundbreaking international education program. The center also provides other services to MIT students: internships, other opportunities to work in programs, and help with finding resources for research.

Within CIS is the MIT Security Studies Program (SSP), a graduate-level research and educational program. SSP’s teaching ties are with the Political Science Department. Courses offered emphasize grand strategy, the causes and prevention of international and civil conflict, military technology, nuclear proliferation, bureaucratic politics, national security, budgetary issues, and security issues in Asia. A special feature of the program is the integration of knowledge on technology with knowledge from the social sciences in the study of international security problems. SSP’s primary task is educating the next generation of security scholars and practitioners. For more information, contact Joli Divon Saraf (joli@mit.edu), Room E40-477, 617-258-7608.

MISTI is MIT’s pioneering international education program. MISTI matches over 1,200 MIT undergrads and graduate students with internship, research, and teaching opportunities abroad each year. The MISTI Global Seed Funds program facilitates international faculty collaborations. A nucleus of international activity at MIT, MISTI develops partnerships with leading companies, research institutes and universities around the world. Email MISTI (misti@mit.edu) for more information.

Seminar XXI is an educational program for senior military officers, government and NGO officials, and executives in the national security policy community. The program’s objective is to provide future leaders of that community with enhanced analytic skills for understanding foreign countries and the relations among them. The fundamental criterion for fellows is that candidates should reach top decision-making levels in the next three to five years. The program explores key policy issues by examining countries and problems critical to American interests through a variety of paradigmatic lenses. For more information, contact Tisha Gomes Voss (tishag@mit.edu), Room E40-445, 617-258-6862.

The Policy Lab at the Center for International Studies (PL@CIS) works to enhance the impact of MIT research on public policy, in order to best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century. The PL@CIS provides funding and staff assistance to translate and disseminate research findings to public policy makers. It is available through an annual call for proposals, which is open to any faculty or research staff with principal investigator status. For more information, contact Daniel Pomeroy (dpomeroy@mit.edu), E40-451, 617-324-7496.

The Inter-University Committee on International Migration, created 30 years ago, organizes the Myron Weiner seminar series, honoring the late MIT professor and pioneer in migration studies. The committee also undertakes other projects on an ad hoc basis. Member institutions are Boston University, Brandeis University, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Harvard, MIT, Tufts University, and Wellesley College. The committee is hosted at MIT by CIS. For more information, email the MISTI team (cis-migration@mit.edu).

The Program on Emerging Technologies (PoET) encourages responsible technological innovation, with research on the political economy of innovation and on adaptive risk governance. Work on synthetic biology is conducted in partnership with technologists at the MIT Synthetic Biology Center and the Harvard Wyss Institute. Work on biomedical issues is conducted in partnership with the MIT Center for Biomedical Innovation and the Tufts Center for Translational Medicine. Work on information security and privacy is conducted in partnership with the Internet Policy Research Institute of the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL). PoET provides policy recommendations to a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, NIH National Science Advisory Board on Biosecurity, Environmental Protection Agency, Defense Intelligence Board, UN World Health Organization, UN Biological Weapons Convention, European Medicines Agency, and the National Academy of Sciences. For more information, contact PoET director Kenneth Oye (oye@mit.edu), E40-437, 617-253-3412.

The Persian Gulf Initiative was launched in 2005 and has now held workshops on political violence, stability and legitimacy, energy security, the regional impacts of the Iraq war, and other topics. It sponsors research such as the Iraq mortality study, publications, and public forums, several of which have been held in Washington, DC, and New York. For more information, contact executive director John Tirman (tirman@mit.edu), Room E40-447, 617-253-9861.

CIS manages the MIT-Japan International Studies Fund Grants, intended for advanced doctoral students at MIT working in close collaboration with faculty members on any international aspect of energy, environment, and international affairs.

Fellows

The center offers the Robert E Wilhelm Fellowship to senior leaders from the public service community. The center also offers fellowships
and educational experiences to journalists, current and future leaders in the US armed forces, governments agencies, NGOs, and private companies. Fellowships are awarded to students and scholars who are working on a range of global security issues.

For more information, contact executive director John Tirman (tirman@mit.edu), Room E40-447, 617-253-9861.

Events and Seminars

The MIT Starr Forum is the center’s flagship public event series. The forum brings to campus leading academics, policymakers, and journalists to discuss pressing issues in the world of international relations and US foreign policy. Individual programs host seminars on a range of international topics, such as migration, national defense, and cultural immersion. Others are focused on specific regions and explore domestic and foreign policy issues in Russia, the Middle East, and South Asia. For more information, contact Michelle English (http://english7@mit.edu), Room E40-443, 617-253-1965.