

Robin Ferris-Hanson

Proposal for Inter-Disciplinary Studies:  
Lyric Expression in American Culture

I was prompted to design “Lyric Expression in American Culture” as a major by my interest in the fields of creative writing and music. I believe the courses I have taken thus far have given me a strong foundation in both of these fields. I will continue taking courses in these fields for my remaining two semesters, and I believe that by the time I graduate I will feel comfortable pursuing professional endeavors in either field individually, or in a field that combines these two subjects. I believe “Lyric Expression in American Culture” offers a truly unique perspective on both English and music, as it has allowed me to examine them in a creative context. The alternative to designing this major was a major in English and a minor in music. While there would have been some course overlap, this major has allowed me to study music and English equally, each in the context of the other.

I believe these two subjects share a symbiotic relationship that has been present in human history as long as they have both existed, and still appears strongly in contemporary culture. Through the English courses I have taken, I have studied how to best use language to convey ideas and emotions. The music courses have taught me the development of music through history, as well as the complex theory behind music composition in both written and aural forms. The other courses I have taken and will take have taught me the role lyrical music has played in American history and the effects it has had on the development of our culture.

I have arranged an internship for this summer 2008 at the Oxford American magazine in Conway. I will receive Odyssey credit for my work there, and I believe it will also help round out my proposed plan of study. While working at the Oxford American I’ll get an insider’s perspective on the publishing industry, and what it takes for a creative writer to get published in a nationally distributed magazine.

While I have taken advantage of the creative writing resources Hendrix currently offers, I am aware that in order to fully incorporate the creative element into this major I will need to receive additional upper-level training elsewhere. For this reason, I have chosen to study abroad during fall semester 2008. I will go to Greece through the Hellenic International Studies in the Arts program. While there I will complete two additional creative writing courses, as well as a world literature course. My time spent abroad will not only allow me to gain experience in creative writing through new, non-Hendrix sources, but I believe it will also help me to reflect on the role lyric expression plays in American culture by viewing my culture from a foreign perspective.

When I return to Hendrix in the spring of 2009, I will conclude my studies with an upper-level course in American literature and an advanced creative writing course with Dr. Jaeger, the recently hired creative writing resident. I will also take an independent study with Hope Coulter, where I will focus on assembling a chapbook-length collection of poems that will be both a unified creative work and a demonstration of the artistic principles I have learned through my studies. I will also write a 12-15-page paper explaining the principles of creative writing I have learned and utilized in the

collection. This project and the grade I receive for it will represent my senior capstone experience.

By the end of spring semester 2008 I will have successfully completed the following eleven courses involving Lyric Expression in American Culture.

- ENGL 203 01 Creative Writing: Poetry
- ENGL 204 01 Creative Writing: Fiction
- TART 290 01 Playwriting
- ENGL 301 01 Creative Writing: Non Fiction
- ENGL 269 01 Film Studies
- MUSI 100 01 Music Fundamentals
- MUSI 150 01 Survey of Western Classical Music
- MUSI 201 01 Basic Musicianship Skills
- MUSI 202 01 Intro to Diatonic Harmony
- AMST 320 01 American Roots Music
- PSYC 493 01 Psychology, Music, and American Culture

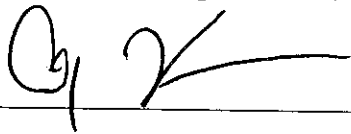
I will take the following courses while studying overseas.

- Creative Writing Survey and Workshop: Poetry
- Creative Writing Survey and Workshop: Fiction
- Film Studies
- World Literature

I will take the following courses spring semester 2009.

- ENGL 304 01 Advanced Creative Writing: Fiction
- ENGL 335 01 Amer Literary Modernism (1900 –1945)
- Independent Study and Capstone Experience

My advisor is Dr. Alex Vernon, and my inter-disciplinary studies committee consists of Dr. Vernon, Hope Coulter, and Dr. Ralph McKenna.



Dr. Vernon



Hope Coulter



Dr. McKenna

**Subject:** I.S. Major

**Date:** Monday, March 31, 2008 1:00 PM

**From:** David Sutherland <sutherlandd@hendrix.edu>

**To:** "Ferris-Hanson, Robin" <Ferris-HansonRR@hendrix.edu>

**Conversation:** I.S. Major

Robin,

Your proposal looks good but I need an additional faculty name before I can approve everything.

Dr. Sutherland

\*\*\*\*\*

David C. Sutherland  
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs  
Director of Hendrix-Murphy Foundation  
Professor of Mathematics

Hendrix College  
1600 Washington  
Conway, AR 72032

501-450-1254  
FAX 501-450-1490

\*\*\*\*\*

**Subject:** Interdisciplinary Major

**Date:** Thursday, April 3, 2008 1:36 PM

**From:** David Sutherland <sutherlandd@hendrix.edu>

**To:** "Ferris-Hanson, Robin" <Ferris-HansonRR@hendrix.edu>

**Cc:** "Wang, Xinying" <Wang@hendrix.edu>, "Vernon, Alex" <Vernon@hendrix.edu>, Ralph McKenna <mckennarj@hendrix.edu>, Hope Coulter <hopecoulter99@comcast.net>, "Hurd, Amanda" <Hurd@hendrix.edu>, "Wang, Xinying" <Wang@hendrix.edu>

**Conversation:** Interdisciplinary Major

Robin,

I am writing to acknowledge acceptance of your proposal to major in "Lyric Expression in American Culture" under the Interdisciplinary Studies program. Your proposal meets all the requirements listed in the catalog for the I.S. Program. It is also my understanding that Dr. Alex Vernon will chair your committee and that your committee also includes Dr. Ralph McKenna and Ms. Hope Coulter.

Please complete the attached declaration of major form and return it to the Registrar's Office as soon as possible.

Please remember that any changes to this proposal must be approved in writing by both your faculty committee and me. Also, please remember that as with any major, at least 50% of major courses must be taken in residence at the College and a minimum grade point average of 2.0 in the major must be achieved.

Good luck with your courses!

David

P.S. I would like to request your permission to use your proposal as a guide for other students by making it available on the I.S. web pages. Please let me know if you are willing to allow me to do this.

\*\*\*\*\*

David C. Sutherland  
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs  
Director of Hendrix-Murphy Foundation  
Professor of Mathematics

**Hurd, Amanda**

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**From:** Sutherland, David  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 03, 2008 3:21 PM  
**To:** Hurd, Amanda  
**Subject:** FW: Interdisciplinary Major

Print this for our file and you can put his on the web.  
\*\*\*\*\*

David C. Sutherland  
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs  
Director of Hendrix-Murphy Foundation  
Professor of Mathematics

Hendrix College  
1600 Washington  
Conway, AR 72032

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----- Forwarded Message  
**From:** "Ferris-Hanson, Robin" <Ferris-HansonRR@hendrix.edu>  
**Date:** Thu, 3 Apr 2008 13:59:49 -0500  
**To:** "Sutherland, David" <sutherlandd@hendrix.edu>  
**Conversation:** Interdisciplinary Major  
**Subject:** RE: Interdisciplinary Major

Dr. Sutherland,

Thank you, and you can absolutely use it on the web pages.

Robin

-----Original Message-----  
**From:** Sutherland, David  
**Sent:** Thu 4/3/2008 1:36 PM  
**To:** Ferris-Hanson, Robin  
**Cc:** Wang, Xinying; Vernon, Alex; McKenna, Ralph; Hope Coulter; Hurd, Amanda; Wang, Xinying  
**Subject:** Interdisciplinary Major

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4/3/2008

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----- End of Forwarded Message