INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Capable and self-motivated students wishing to explore major courses of study not offered by the College may petition for an Interdisciplinary Studies major. The major allows such students the freedom to design and develop a course of study which combines classes taken from several departments or areas. Each Interdisciplinary Studies major must have a coherent thematic principle governing the selection and sequencing of courses in the major and it must be consistent with the goals of a liberal arts education. Students who would like to explore an Interdisciplinary Studies major are urged to consult with their faculty advisor or the office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.

A student wishing to pursue an interdisciplinary major should, before spring registration of the sophomore year, find a faculty advisor who is interested in mentoring him or her through this major. Under no circumstances should this be done later than the fall semester of the student’s junior year.

- The student and advisor, working together, will draft a program of study satisfying the requirements for an interdisciplinary major (see below).
- The student will write a justification for this major, articulating its overarching theme and stating his or her aims and the way the major will satisfy them.
- The student and advisor will recruit one or two more faculty members to constitute the supervisory committee for the major. The advisor will chair this committee. The committee will review and approve, with possible modifications, the proposed major and its justification.
- The proposed major, signed by the student and the members of the committee, will be sent to the Associate Provost for approval, along with the student’s narrative justification for it.
- If the Associate Provost approves the proposed major, he or she will notify the student and the committee in writing that the major has been accepted. The Associate Provost will inform the Registrar of the student’s major requirements.
- Once the major has been accepted, any changes must be approved by the committee and by the Associate Provost, who will report the changes to the Registrar.

In addition to its thematic coherence, an interdisciplinary studies major must include the following components.

- A clear title for the major;
- At least 10 courses (with suitable alternate courses, if appropriate). 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;
- No fewer than 4 of the major courses at the 300- or 400-level;
- One of the required courses must be a senior capstone experience with elements that are methodologically appropriate for the major. At the time of the major’s proposal, a short description of the nature of this capstone course should be included.