Interdisciplinary Second Major

Overview

The Interdisciplinary Second Major (ISM) allows students to pursue a unique learning path that integrates material from several disciplines. Working with a variety of faculty members, each student designs a comprehensive curriculum for rigorous study of a specific topic or intense training in a closely defined area.

The ISM is designed for students who have already declared a primary major in an existing program. Students may not use the ISM to achieve a second, and different, bachelor’s degree.

Requirements

I. Each proposed major must have an advisory committee of three faculty members representing two or more different disciplines, one of whom will be chair.

II. The advisory committee will help the student prepare a proposal for the major, select courses, and develop a course that synthesizes the diverse work of the major (normally, an existing three-hour independent study course directed by a member of the faculty advisory committee).

III. In order to submit a proposal for an Interdisciplinary Second Major, a student must have already declared a first major.

IV. The proposal should identify at least nine (9) hours of courses that will serve as a core for the major and an array of supporting courses from which the remaining credits will be chosen. In addition, the proposal should identify
one synthesis course (at least 3 hours), normally taken during the student’s senior year after the core courses have been completed.

V. The minimum number of hours for an interdisciplinary major is thirty-six (36). Of that number, at least eighteen (18) must be upper-division. No more than eighteen (18) hours may be taken from a single discipline. No more than nine (9) hours may be selected from courses that are used towards any other major.

VI. The selection of courses must ensure depth in the area of study as well as breadth of exposure to varied perspectives.

Procedures

I. A student who wishes to pursue an Interdisciplinary Second major must submit a proposal before the end of the second semester of the junior year. The proposal form may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

II. The Interdisciplinary Second Major Committee will consider this proposal and, if approved, will recommend it to the University Curriculum Council for final approval.

III. The advisory committee will monitor the student’s progress toward the major, provide guidance, and evaluate any changes to the course of study.

IV. During the semester in which the student completes the coursework for the major, he or she will make a public presentation to his or her advisory committee in order to demonstrate a mastery of the interdisciplinary topic. This presentation must be organized in conjunction with the student’s synthesis course.