

Interdisciplinary Studies: Information and Application Instructions

The interdisciplinary studies program allows highly motivated and self-directed students to pursue a course of study that falls outside of existing majors and minors by developing an individualized cross-disciplinary course of study. Students pursuing an interdisciplinary-studies major integrate classes from multiple disciplines into a unified and coherent course of study. The principles of integration can be historical, regional, thematic or problem-focused. The interdisciplinary-studies major is not a mechanism to avoid those portions of an existing major that are uninteresting or difficult, nor is it simply a mechanism to take courses in several areas of interest. The major must be a unified program that is academically sound and will contribute to the individual student's intellectual development. This program requires students to actively plan their program and cultivate a working relationship with their faculty advisor(s). The interdisciplinary-studies major culminates in a capstone paper or project that integrates the student's coursework.

Qualifications for the interdisciplinary-studies major are as follows:

- Students proposing an interdisciplinary studies major should have a 2.5+ GPA on all college work completed *at Berry College*.
- The plan must be developed and approved before the student completes 70 semester hours.

Requirements of the interdisciplinary-studies major are as follows:

- a. Satisfactory completion of the interdisciplinary studies seminar, IDS 300, by the end of the junior year;
- b. Satisfactory completion of a minimum of 48 semester hours, to include IDS 300, a three-hour capstone course (see d. below), and 21 or more additional semester hours at the 300 and 400 level;
- c. Satisfactory completion of at least two writing-intensive courses;
- d. Satisfactory completion of a 400-level capstone course or independent study (3 semester hours) in which the student will complete an interdisciplinary senior thesis or project with a written component showing how it integrates the student's course work (typically to be supervised by the student's interdisciplinary studies advisor).

Please note: Courses of study cannot include more than 25 percent of their content or credit hours in the Campbell School of Business, or by name or any similar means, convey a connotation of a program of study in business administration or management. (This restriction does not apply to economics courses (ECO-).)

Students interested in pursuing an interdisciplinary studies major must first secure an appropriate academic advisor and have the "Application Form, part 1" approved. Then, in consultation with their advisor and the coordinator of interdisciplinary studies, students will write a plan outlining their course of study. The plan contains two main elements: a 2- to 3-page essay describing the course of study, and a list of learning objectives indicating courses to be taken to achieve each objective. A tentative schedule of proposed classes by semester and a current transcript must be attached.

Plan Development and Approval Process

Students interested in pursuing an Interdisciplinary Studies Major must do the following:

1. Meet and discuss your interests with faculty members in the relevant fields. Find a faculty member who is willing to serve as your advisor.
2. Meet with the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) Coordinator to discuss your proposed course of study. The IDS Coordinator will give you the "Application Form, part 1." An electronic copy of this application is available on the IDS webpage.

NOTE: If you have completed more than 70 semester hours of coursework or if you do not have at least a 2.5 Berry grade point average, then you must attach to your application a letter addressed to the Coordinator of Interdisciplinary Studies requesting a waiver of these requirements. Explain clearly why these requirements should be waived in your case. You may also be asked to provide further information, such as a recommendation from your advisor.

3. Once you receive permission, you may continue with the "Application Form, part 2."
4. With the help of your advisor, draft a statement of purpose and develop a list of potential courses to be included in your program of study. Faculty members who work with IDS students can provide sample essays and learning objectives.
5. Meet again with the IDS Coordinator for feedback on your essay and list of learning objectives and courses. The IDS Coordinator will then correspond with your advisor about your proposed program of study.
6. With feedback from the IDS Coordinator and your advisor, revise your essay and course list.
7. Submit your completed application to the IDS Coordinator. The application for admission to the interdisciplinary studies major must include the material listed below, in the order listed.
 - Application Form, part 1
 - Statement of Purpose: Provide a 2-3 page essay (500-750 words) describing your proposed program of study. See the attached instructions.
 - Program Planning Form
 - Proposed Schedule of Classes form
 - A current copy of your unofficial transcript from the Viking Web
 - Approval form.

Students must have their written plan approved by their advisor, the coordinator of interdisciplinary studies, and the dean of the school in which the advisor is assigned, who will forward the plan to the provost. The provost will send a copy of the signed plan to the student, the advisor, the coordinator of interdisciplinary studies, and the registrar. Any changes to the plan must be approved by the student's advisor and the coordinator of interdisciplinary studies, who will notify the dean, the provost and the registrar of any changes. The approval of a proposed interdisciplinary-studies plan is not automatic, and the final decision rests with the interdisciplinary studies coordinator in consultation with the appropriate dean. An approved interdisciplinary-studies plan is officially recognized by Berry College as the student's declared academic major.