

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Contact Information

Interdisciplinary Studies

Visit Program Website (<http://curricula.unc.edu/students/interdisciplinary-studies/>)

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Introduction

The interdisciplinary studies major (IDST), designed by the student and the student's faculty advisor, is intended for students who wish to develop a major different from those already offered by the University. An IDST major has more focus than many of the more traditional majors and therefore should not be seen as a default major for someone undecided about his or her course of study. The IDST major must be well conceived and substantially different from majors that students pursue through traditional departments, schools, and curricula. Students must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 and at least 45 hours left before graduation so that they can complete the major in their time left. All IDST students must identify a faculty advisor who, in the absence of a department and a director of undergraduate studies, will serve as their mentor on course selections, career planning, graduate work, and advanced study. Students are strongly encouraged to meet all of the General Education Foundations and Approaches requirements before pursuing the IDST major. The IDST major offers a special opportunity to define a coherent course of study. It is not intended to provide a path that parallels existing majors, nor is it intended to replicate courses of study in the professional schools. The Advisory Board strongly discourages double majors in the IDST program, since focused study in one field is the best path to advancement.

The IDST program is directed by the associate dean for undergraduate curricula in conjunction with an advisory board, representing the three divisions of the College. The board reads and approves all proposals, and initiates any policy changes, with the associate dean serving as initial advisor. Students interested in an interdisciplinary degree program not covered by any degree-granting department or curriculum should apply to the program director for interdisciplinary studies.

In the past, students have designed their own majors in such varied fields as medieval studies, food studies, arts management, medical geography, neuroscience, healthcare policy, medical humanities, cultural studies, behavioral finance, urban studies, documentary studies, computational physics, and ethnobotany.

Advising

Appointments may be made with James Thompson. Inquiries may be made through email (uthomp@email.unc.edu). Students should come prepared with a draft of their major proposal. Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with their advisor and review their Tar Heel Tracker each semester.

Graduate School and Career Opportunities

Since IDST can provide a broad background in the liberal arts, graduate study in a number of academic disciplines is possible. Students are encouraged to contact the graduate or professional school to which they wish to gain admission to determine the specific undergraduate

academic requirements necessary for admission. An IDST major is generally not recommended for students planning graduate study in the sciences, but many students combine majors aimed at medical, legal, or business careers with an IDST major. Career opportunities for IDST majors are as varied as the reasons students give for selecting the major.

Major

- Interdisciplinary Studies Major, B.A. (<http://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/interdisciplinary-studies-major-ba/>)

IDST–Interdisciplinary Studies

Undergraduate-level Courses

IDST 89. First-Year Seminar: Special Topics. 3 Credits.

Content varies each semester.

Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit; may be repeated in the same term for different topics; 6 total credits. 2 total completions.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 111. Ethics, Economics, and Public Policy. 3 Credits.

This interdisciplinary course provides an overview of core tools used to analyze issues at the intersection of ethics, economics and public policy. It introduces students to the tools of economic analysis, including markets, prices, and market failures; discusses the ethical dimensions of markets and public policy, including socio-economic justice, the nature of well-being, and individual liberty; and describes challenges in political organization and action that confront policy makers motivated by economic or ethical objectives.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 112. Death and Dying. 3 Credits.

Death and dying are universal human experiences. Yet there are cultural and historical variations in how we define and experience death and dying. This course explores the concepts of death and dying from three different disciplines (examples may include, but are not limited to, Anthropology, English and Comparative Literature, and Psychology and Neuroscience). This course will consider similarities and differences between the discipline research methodologies and introduce students to data literacy and principles of evidence.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 113. The Idea of Race. 3 Credits.

The idea that humans can be divided into distinct races has been used to justify the persecution, enslavement, and extermination of groups based on their presumed inferiority. Today, scientists agree that what we describe as races are in fact social constructs, not genetic realities. Students will learn why race is not a viable biological concept, how the idea of race arose and is maintained, and what alternatives exist for understanding diversity and change over time.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 114. Science Fiction, the Environment, and Vulnerable Communities. 3 Credits.

This course focuses on the question of how the genre of science fiction has been used to address the world's environmental concerns and how these concerns affect communities differently depending on their gender, race, and class. The course investigates global environmental challenges including resources, overpopulation, consumption, and climate change. Emphasis will be placed on texts and characters created by women and ethnic minorities. Students will be introduced to comparative, global, intersectional, and interdisciplinary approaches.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 115. Understanding Health and Happiness. 3 Credits.

This course exposes students to diverse scientific approaches to understanding happiness and subjective and physical well-being. The three professors offer perspectives from three disciplines: physiology, psychology, and sociology. The course teaches students research skills as well as evidence-based life skills, such as teamwork, developing social connections including 'belongingness' at UNC, being physically active, and becoming confident that they can deploy these skills to increase their happiness and health.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 116. Gender. 3 Credits.

This course will consider gender through the lenses of three distinct disciplines. We will explore gender-related issues and consider how gender has been conceptualized, represented, and challenged throughout history. This course will establish a foundation from which students can think critically about gender from multiple perspective-personal, social, cultural, and political.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 117. Experiencing Latin America: Bodies, Belonging, Nature. 3 Credits.

This course examines linguistic, geopolitical, and socio-environmental boundaries to foster an inter-sectional understanding of identity and belonging in the Americas. Course topics (e.g., migration, justice, environmental well being) are examined through Spanish language-based films and artwork. Students will expand their understanding of the Spanish language, context art, and global issues. Students will have assignments that involve performance, creative design, and fabrication.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 180. First-Generation College Students in Higher Education. 1 Credit.

First-generation college students will have the opportunity to explore their first-generation identity and start to define what it means for them to be a scholar and citizen leader. The course will introduce scholars to educational research on the first-generation college student experience and allow scholars the opportunity to reflect on their own experience and salient identities in the college environment. Education equity and diversity in higher education will be addressed through course readings and activities.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 184. Research beyond Academia. 1 Credit.

Researchers from the Triangle region and beyond will discuss their research to provide students with exposure to research opportunities and careers outside academia. This course meets a requirement for the Carolina Research Scholars Program.

Grading status: Pass/Fail.

IDST 190. Special Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies. 3 Credits.

Special topics course. Content varies each semester.

Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit; may be repeated in the same term for different topics; 9 total credits. 3 total completions.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 190L. Special Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies Lab. 1 Credit.

Special topics course. Content varies each semester.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 194. Modes of Inquiry. 1 Credit.

A seminar in which faculty discuss their own work. Students will learn how topics are defined and investigated and how undergraduates can engage in discovery. Pass/Fail only.

Grading status: Pass/Fail.

IDST 195. Undergraduate Research Consulting Team. 1 Credit.

A mentored research course for students participating in an undergraduate research consulting team under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Requires participation in research and a report/presentation.

Gen Ed: EE- Mentored Research.

Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 3 total credits. 3 total completions.

Grading status: Pass/Fail.

IDST 201. Increasing Diversity in STEM Research. 1 Credit.

Required of Chancellor's Science Scholars and open to others by permission of the instructor. The course will explore the broad range of STEM research available at UNC-Chapel Hill, and will address issues of developing more diversity in the STEM research workforce nationwide. Permission of the instructor to add and drop this course.

Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 4 total credits. 4 total completions.

Grading status: Pass/Fail.

IDST 290. Special Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies. 1-3 Credits.

Special topics course. Content varies each semester.

Grading status: Pass/Fail.

IDST 296. Course Correspondent Project. 1 Credit.

Permission of the instructor and the instructor's department. Learning contract required. Students participating in UNC-led study abroad programs develop activities to supplement instruction in on-campus courses. Supervised by the on-campus instructor, students file reports on the sites, language, and culture of the country in which they are studying. Pass/Fail only.

Grading status: Pass/Fail.

IDST 301. American Colleges and Universities: Junior Transfer Seminar. 3 Credits.

This course will examine American colleges and universities from a variety of perspectives, ranging from the individual student's experience to the role of higher education in larger social systems. The course will survey diverse institutions in American higher education. Students will compare the unique needs of these institutions as well as the populations they serve.

Gen Ed: SS, EE- Field Work.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 396. Independent Study. 1-3 Credits.

Independent project to be arranged with an instructor.

Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 6 total credits. 6 total completions.

Grading status: Letter grade.

Advanced Undergraduate and Graduate-level Courses**IDST 496. Independent Study. 1-6 Credits.**

Permission of the department. Special reading and research for graduate and undergraduate students on a specific interdisciplinary topic under the direction of a faculty member.

Repeat rules: May be repeated for credit. 12 total credits. 2 total completions.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 691H. Senior Honors Thesis. 3 Credits.

Permission of the instructor. Required of all senior honors candidates.

Gen Ed: EE- Mentored Research.

Grading status: Letter grade.

IDST 692H. Senior Honors Thesis. 3 Credits.

Permission of the instructor. Second semester of senior honors thesis; required of all senior honors candidates.

Gen Ed: EE- Mentored Research.

Grading status: Letter grade.