

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJOR, B.A.

Overview

The interdisciplinary studies major provides an innovative space and a flexible, individualized program structure for students who wish to develop a major different from those already offered by the departments and curricula belonging to the College of Arts and Sciences. Interdisciplinary studies majors are designed to support rigorous investigation of a topic, theme, or area of inquiry, mastery of which requires advanced coursework in multiple disciplinary fields. An IDST major allows motivated students to engage complex problems and emerging areas of knowledge that exceed traditional disciplinary boundaries. They must be well conceived and substantially different from majors that students pursue through traditional departments, schools, and curricula. While encouraging creativity, IDST majors will be focused and coherent. Interdisciplinary studies should not be seen as a default major for someone undecided about their course of study.

Interdisciplinary studies majors work with their individually selected faculty advisors to develop a customized program of courses that will constitute the requirements for their IDST major. Besides guiding students on course selections, faculty advisors serve as mentors on career planning, graduate work, and co-curricular opportunities. To be admitted to the major, students must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 and at least 45 hours left before graduation. Students are strongly encouraged to meet most of the General Education requirements (e.g., First-Year Foundations and Focus Capacities) before pursuing the interdisciplinary studies major.

Admission to the Program

The interdisciplinary studies major is an application-based program. Students can apply to the major after their first year at UNC. The program has two application deadlines (<https://curricula.unc.edu/interdisciplinary-studies-major/>) per academic year, one at the start of each semester.

Additional instructions about the application process can be found on the Office of Undergraduate Curricula website (<https://curricula.unc.edu/interdisciplinary-studies-major/>).

Requirements

In addition to the program requirements, students must

- earn a minimum final cumulative GPA of 2.000
- complete a minimum of 45 academic credit hours earned from UNC–Chapel Hill courses
- take at least half of their major core requirements (courses and credit hours) at UNC–Chapel Hill
- earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.000 in the major core requirements. Some programs may require higher standards for major or specific courses.

For more information, please consult the degree requirements section of the catalog (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/degree-requirements/>).

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Code	Title	Hours
Core Requirements		
Eight courses chosen from at least three departments and which must be appropriate for juniors and seniors majoring in those departments. ^{1, 2, 3}		24
Total Hours		24

- ¹ A maximum of four courses from any one department
- ² For students interested in Cultural Studies, COMM 350 Practices of Cultural Studies must be included as one of the eight courses. For more information, please contact the Cultural Studies Faculty Director and Advisor in the Department of Communication (<https://comm.unc.edu/undergraduate-studies/major-in-cultural-studies/>).
- ³ With the permission of the relevant professional school, a student may use up to 12 hours of professional courses (e.g., in business administration, media and journalism, information and library science, public health, education) in the IDST major. This can be advantageous to students who want some concentration in these areas but who also want a degree in arts and sciences.

The courses should form a coherent major summarized by the title. Additionally, students are encouraged to select electives that complement the eight courses chosen for the major to prepare for, extend, and deepen their topical knowledge. To maximize the interdisciplinary synergy that the IDST major aims to facilitate, students are advised to include courses from at least two divisions in the College of Arts and Sciences (i.e., Fine Arts & Humanities, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences and Global Programs) in their eight-course core curriculum.

Special Opportunities in Interdisciplinary Studies

Qualified students may pursue honors by registering for IDST 691H and IDST 692H or through one of the departments or curricula included in their major core. IDST students are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to extend or apply their knowledge through hands-on learning opportunities related to their program of study. This may include undergraduate research opportunities available in the departments and curricula that constitute their program of study; an internship or service-learning experience in the summer or during the academic year, study abroad, and/or an honors thesis in their senior year.

Contact Information

Interdisciplinary Studies

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

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