

# Interdisciplinary Studies

**DIRECTOR**

Patricia La Noue  
*Interdisciplinary studies*

**INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES COMMITTEE**

Antonio Moreira  
*Ex officio*  
*Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*  
*Chemical and Biochemical Engineering*

Robert Deluty  
*Psychology*

Brian Grodsky  
*Political science*

Kriste Lindenmeyer  
*History*

Robin Majeski  
*Erickson School of Aging Studies*

Steven McAlpine  
*Interdisciplinary Studies*

Timothy Oates  
*Computer science and engineering*

Joshua Okundaye  
*Social work*

Julia Ross  
*Chemical and biochemical engineering*

Phillip Rous  
*Physics*

Carrie Sauter  
*Interdisciplinary studies*

Teresa Viancour  
*Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education*  
*Biological sciences*

Frederic Worden  
*Visual arts*

Two Student  
Representatives

*Courses in this program are listed under INDS.*

Interdisciplinary studies welcomes students with diverse academic interests to explore the possibilities of bridging disciplines, widening perspectives, discovering connections and merging knowledge. Interdisciplinary studies is an innovative and integrative way for students to accommodate their individuality by combining different fields of study into one unique major.

Interdisciplinary studies at UMBC provides students the opportunity to complete a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree by designing a course of study compatible with their specific educational and career goals. Individually designed majors are ideal for students who wish to be engaged in a collaborative academic environment and work closely with

faculty and staff. Degree proposals must be developed with faculty guidance, facilitated and supported by the Interdisciplinary Studies advisors, and approved by the interdisciplinary studies Committee (ISC).

Students are encouraged to declare interdisciplinary studies as a major in their freshman or sophomore year. In some cases, students in their junior year can be accommodated. The earlier students get involved with interdisciplinary studies, the more opportunities there are to explore ideas, share in interdisciplinary studies events and receive developmental advising as they explore their options.

A completed degree proposal is not required to declare the major.

**Sample Interdisciplinary Studies Majors**

- ◆ American history and literature
- ◆ Arabic and middle eastern cultural studies
- ◆ Artificial Intelligence
- ◆ Arts management
- ◆ Bioengineering
- ◆ Bioethics
- ◆ Cinema studies
- ◆ Community health
- ◆ Criminal justice
- ◆ Dramaturgy
- ◆ Educational policy
- ◆ Environmental writing
- ◆ Evolution and literary theory
- ◆ Forensic science
- ◆ Graphic design and information systems
- ◆ Integrative health studies
- ◆ International and global studies
- ◆ International security and counter-terrorism
- ◆ Judaic studies
- ◆ Math and science education
- ◆ Military studies
- ◆ Music entrepreneurship
- ◆ Music and world culture
- ◆ Philosophy of science
- ◆ Neuroscience
- ◆ Religious studies and counseling
- ◆ Scientific visualization and computer animation
- ◆ Scriptwriting
- ◆ Science writing
- ◆ Sustainable development
- ◆ Theatre and psychology

**Since 1969, UMBC has offered students the opportunity to create their own individualized majors.**

Interdisciplinary studies works closely with faculty across the university and encourages inquiry and integrative thinking.

Developmental advising is comprehensive in interdisciplinary studies, and many students are guided to design an interdisciplinary studies major along with another major, minor or certificate.

**Career and Academic Paths**

Interdisciplinary studies graduates are prepared to enter professional careers or pursue advanced training. Degree proposals are designed with an eye toward preparing students for their stated career goals. Recent graduates have embarked on careers with international aid organizations, the media, arts, environmental organizations, computer firms, allied health organizations and government agencies. Others have pursued advanced training and completed doctorates in various disciplines. Interdisciplinary Studies alumni also include graduates of professional schools, including medical, divinity and law.

**Academic Advising**

Students are invited to the interdisciplinary studies office (Fine Arts, 546) to meet with an academic advisor. Each student will receive guidance and mentoring from professional staff as well as UMBC faculty. Interdisciplinary studies advisors are available to discuss academic programs, course selection, internships, independent study, study abroad options and other areas of academic interest.

## 122 INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

### B.A. or B.S. Degree

Students may complete requirements for either a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. Titles of individually designed majors are included on the final transcript (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies: Biomedical Ethics).

### Honors Program

Qualified students are encouraged to pursue an honors program. To graduate with honors in Interdisciplinary studies, students must have an overall 3.5 GPA and successfully complete at least four approved honors courses, including the interdisciplinary studies seminar and capstone project.

### Combined B.A. and Master in Policy Sciences Program

Interdisciplinary studies and the Policy Sciences Graduate Program cooperate in offering qualified students a joint program leading to both a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies and an M.A. in Policy Sciences. Students in the joint program can earn the two degrees in five years.

### Special Opportunities

Students are encouraged to complete at least one internship in their area of interest. Interdisciplinary studies majors have completed internships in such areas as law enforcement, social services, health care, education and the environment. Students arrange their own internships under the guidance of interdisciplinary studies advisors and enroll in INDS 410. The capstone project (INDS 490) is required of all Interdisciplinary studies majors. The student pursues an area of independent research with the faculty mentors closely monitoring the student's work.

### Student Organizations

The Interdisciplinary Studies Council of Majors is open to students interested in an interdisciplinary approach to education. The council, which meets bimonthly, sponsors service, social and educational events throughout the year and provides an informal student network among interdisciplinary studies majors.

### The Two Types of Interdisciplinary Studies Degree Proposals

#### Type A

Type A proposals have an identifiable theme of concentration. Students develop a thematic area of concentration that integrates several disciplines. Representative Type A proposals include: environmental management, neuroscience, international and global studies, integrative health studies, art in community and bioethics.

#### Type B

Type B proposals draw from two or three distinct disciplinary or professional concentrations. Examples include biology and ancient studies, social work and photography, music and religious studies, emergency health and information systems and computer science and digital art. Instead of a thematic concentration, students complete a minimum of 18 credits in courses at the 200 level or higher in each of two disciplines, or 15 credits in each of three disciplines.

At least 15 credits must be in courses at the 300 level or above.

### Interdisciplinary Studies Program Process

1. Students should visit [www.umbc.edu/inds](http://www.umbc.edu/inds) to view the video describing the program and read through sample degree proposals. The next step is to arrange a meeting with an interdisciplinary studies advisor to explore

the advisability of the major. Students can contact the program at [inds\\_info@umbc.edu](mailto:inds_info@umbc.edu).

Following the initial advising meeting, students will continue exploring options with at least two faculty members who will guide them through the proposal development process. One of the advisors must have full-time faculty status at UMBC. Academic requirements must be discussed with faculty and interdisciplinary studies advisors while completing the degree proposal form before it is submitted to the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee.

Students can declare the interdisciplinary studies major at any time before earning 90 credits. Freshmen and sophomores are encouraged to declare the major early to maximize the benefits of academic advising.

Degree proposals must be submitted after the student earns 60 credits but before 90 credits. Each degree proposal must be endorsed in writing by the two faculty advisors and approved by the interdisciplinary studies advisor before it can be submitted to the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee for consideration.

### Requirements of an Interdisciplinary Studies Proposal

1. The degree proposal should reflect the student's intellectual and career goals and should describe an advanced level of study. Proposal forms are available in the interdisciplinary studies office and on the Web site: [www.umbc.edu/inds](http://www.umbc.edu/inds).
2. The degree proposal must be comprised of courses from at least two academic disciplines, but it cannot duplicate a course of study presently available within an existing academic department at UMBC.
3. A minimum 2.5 GPA is required to submit a degree proposal.
4. The proposed degree plan must consist of at least 42 credits of standard university course work. A maximum of 12 upper-level credits from another institution may be included.
5. The majority of courses in the proposed degree plan must be at the 300 and 400 level. 100-level courses are not included in the major. All university degree requirements must be met, including the general education and upper-level course requirements.
6. Each interdisciplinary studies major is required to take INDS 330, INDS 430, INDS 480 and INDS 490.
7. A capstone project, supervised by faculty advisors, must be completed in the student's senior year. The project may consist of a research paper, a composition, a video, an artistic endeavor exhibiting the culmination of a specific area of study or other work approved by the faculty advisors and the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee.
8. A grade of "C" or better must be earned for each course listed on the proposed degree plan. The grade of "pass" is acceptable if a course is offered only on a P/F basis.
9. Any change in an approved degree plan must be requested in writing, approved by both of the student's faculty advisors, the interdisciplinary studies advisor and the director of interdisciplinary studies.