



Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies

What is the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies?

The BIS is a self-designed degree program for undergraduate students with an interest in studying a topic or issue through the integration of multiple disciplinary perspectives and/or applied fields.



Interdisciplinary studies is an approach that draws upon and integrates the perspectives, concepts, theories, and methods from multiple disciplines (fields of study) in order to understand an issue, solve a problem, answer a question, or address a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately within a single discipline. Here are three examples of interdisciplinary studies in action:

- In order to understand financial dynamics the economist and Nobel Laureate Robert J. Shiller integrated insights from psychology, sociology, history, and literature with the models of economics.
- Seeking to explain soil erosion in West Africa, the geographer Piers Blaikie combined perspectives from ecology with theory from political economy (the study of social power in the economy). In so doing, he created a new field known as political ecology.
- Endeavoring to improve science education, in particular more more effective teaching of science to non-science majors, UWG chemistry professor Anne Gaquere-Parker and her colleagues brought together analytical techniques from chemistry and concepts and tools from art history.

“In the longer run and for wide-reaching issues, more creative solutions tend to come from imaginative interdisciplinary collaboration.”

-Robert J. Shiller, Nobel Laureate and economist

What is the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (cont'd)?

The BIS provides UWG students an opportunity to work within and across multiple academic disciplines and professional fields while systematically developing the techniques and tools of interdisciplinarity. We cannot wait to add your interdisciplinary creativity and innovations to the list above!

Is this the major for you?

- Are you motivated to be an intellectual pioneer, seeking an academic path that challenges you to think outside-the-box, be creative, and produce innovative approaches, applications, and answers?
- Are you returning to college or university with previously-earned credit hours that can be built into a program of study around a topic or career field that interests you?
- Are you in the workforce and looking to further develop your skills or knowledge about an issue specific to your industry or one you aspire to move into?
- Are you interested in multiple academic fields and would like to explore them in the context of a real-world problem or challenge?
- Are you interested in a question that seems too broad, complex, or dynamic to address within the confines of any single existing field of study?

Program of study

All BIS majors design a program of study organized around a theme and grounded in two disciplines. The degree plan is the specification of this thematic program of study and is developed by the student in consultation with an advising committee. A degree plan:

- articulates the theme, topic, or issue that will be the focus of the BIS major's program of study,
- identifies two grounding disciplines,
- lists long-term goals and learning objectives,
- identifies 24 hours of coursework, including courses from the two grounding disciplines as well as Interdisciplinary Methods (XIDS 3000) and Interdisciplinary Capstone (XIDS 4000),
- describes an idea for a capstone project (research, performance, exhibition, service learning, etc.).

The student's advising committee consists of an interdisciplinary studies advisor and two disciplinary mentors, each representing one of the grounding disciplines. Both the student and the committee sign the degree plan as well as any subsequent revisions of it. Any BIS major with at least 60 hours must have a signed degree plan.

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