

# INDIVIDUALLY STRUCTURED MAJOR

**Director:** Associate Dean Marjorie Levine-Clark  
**Faculty advisor:** Brandon Mills

## Overview

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Interdisciplinary Studies Major (ISM) provides students with the opportunity to construct an individualized major that meets their unique needs and interests, and which results in a B.A.. This flexible program allows students to follow academic pursuits that transcend traditional department or college boundaries, combining coursework from two, three, or even more academic units to explore a particular theme. An ISM tends to be more focused than traditional majors and should not be considered a default major for students uncertain about their course of study.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Student

- creates the ISM proposal and course contract (in collaboration with faculty advisors)
- meets regularly with ISM Primary Advisor to assess progress through ISM
- fulfills requirements of ISM course contract

### Associate Dean for Planning, Initiatives, and Diversity

- approves student proposals for ISM
- signs off on ISM course contracts
- maintains records of ISM applications
- certifies graduation

### Primary Faculty Advisor

- approves ISM course contract
- meets with ISM advisees to monitor progress
- oversees advisees' capstone projects

### Other Faculty Advisors

- approve course contract
- help with capstone projects when needed

### CLAS Academic Advisor

- reviews overall course contract
- approves exempt core area

## Honors

Liberal arts students interested in graduating with Latin honors in the individually structured major program should meet with the assistant/associate dean in the CLAS Advising Office to verify they meet eligibility requirements and to modify the program plan for the honors project. Students who successfully complete the ISM honors program will have the appropriate Latin honor designation placed on the University of Colorado diploma and transcript.

To participate in the ISM honors program, CLAS students must meet each of the following eligibility requirements:

- have a declared ISM major with an approved ISM contract
- possess a minimum 3.2 cumulative University of Colorado GPA
- possess a minimum 3.5 GPA on all completed University of Colorado course work in the ISM contract

Eligible ISM students must complete an undergraduate research project and present the results to a faculty honors committee. The level of Latin honors awarded is determined by the faculty honors committee. ISM students are to complete 3 to 6 semester hours of undergraduate independent study over a period of two semesters in one of the disciplines that constitute the ISM contract. The faculty sponsor from the project discipline will serve as the honors committee chair. The independent study research project is to produce a thesis-quality report to be presented orally to a three-member interdisciplinary faculty honors committee representing the disciplines in the ISM contract. Upon completion of the research report and oral presentation to the honors committee, the level of Latin honors will be determined by the following criteria:

- cum laude-awarded upon completion of written report and oral presentation
- magna cum laude-awarded by honors committee based on successful written report and oral presentation
- summa cum laude-awarded by honors committee based on excellence in written report and oral presentation

## Application for an ISM:

In order to declare an Interdisciplinary Studies Major, students are required to submit a program plan that includes a proposal and a course contract. Students should aim to complete a program plan before the end of the sophomore year. The proposal should be approved before students have taken one-third of the classes listed in their course contracts. Copies of your completed ISM proposal and course contract must be filed with the Associate Dean for Planning, Initiatives, and Diversity and with your CLAS Academic Advisor.

- The ISM proposal must include:
  - A description of your chosen theme (see below for sample themes).
  - An explanation of why the theme requires coursework that integrates multiple disciplines. You can choose a theme within interdisciplinary frameworks already established in CLAS but which do not offer BA degrees. These frameworks include Chinese Studies, Health Humanities, Law Studies, Religious Studies, Social Justice, Sustainability, and Women's and Gender Studies. You are also encouraged to create your own frameworks.
  - An outline of specific learning objectives for the ISM (see below for sample learning objectives).
  - Approval from the Associate Dean for Planning, Initiatives and Diversity.
- Your ISM course contract must include:
  - A list of the courses in your chosen disciplines and the optional "grab bag" of courses that you intend to apply to your ISM, as well as potential alternate courses. You should work closely with the Associate Dean for Planning, Initiatives, and Diversity and faculty advisors in your chosen disciplines to create your course contract.
  - Signatures from your chosen Primary Faculty Advisor from one of your main disciplines and signatures from Faculty Advisors from

your other main disciplines. You do not need a faculty advisor for grab bag courses.

- Signature from your Academic Advisor.
- Signature from the Associate Dean for Planning, Initiatives, and Diversity.

## Programs

### Individually Structured Major Options

- Integrated Health Sciences Option, BA - Individually Structured Major (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/individually-structured-major/integrated-health-sciences-option-ba/>)
- Integrated Studies, BA - Individually Structured Major (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/individually-structured-major/integrated-studies-ba/>)
- Intercampus Interdisciplinary Option, BA - Individually Structured Major (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/individually-structured-major/intercampus-interdisciplinary-option-ba/>)
- Interdisciplinary Studies, BA - Individually Structured Major (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/individually-structured-major/interdisciplinary-studies-ba/>)

### Individually Structured Major (ISMA)

**ISMA 1500 - Introduction to Interdisciplinary Learning (3 Credits)**  
This course introduces the theories, methodologies, and practices of interdisciplinary studies through a specific theme that will focus on how to learn in an online environment and how interdisciplinary scholars combine the theories and methods of a variety of fields. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Max hours: 3 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**ISMA 2840 - Independent Study (1-3 Credits)**  
Note: Students must submit a special processing form completely filled out and signed by the student and faculty member, describing the course expectations, assignments and outcomes, to the CLAS undergraduate advising office for approval. Repeatable. Max Hours: 3 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Repeatable. Max Credits: 3.

**ISMA 3000 - Special Topics (1-3 Credits)**  
Special classes for faculty-directed experiences examining issues and problems not generally covered in the curriculum. Max hours: 9 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Repeatable. Max Credits: 9.

**ISMA 3100 - Learning Across Disciplines (3 Credits)**  
Examining a compelling issue, students will learn what kinds of questions require thinking beyond a single discipline, how interdisciplinary scholars combine a variety of fields, and how to approach the challenges of interdisciplinary writing. Term offered: fall, spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**ISMA 3500 - Interdisciplinary Experiential Learning (3 Credits)**  
In this course, students will the knowledge from their chosen clusters to bear on an experiential opportunity. Choosing an internship, community-based project, or job extension, students will collaborate with peers to design projects in this highly student-driven course. Prereq: ISMA 1500 with a C- or higher. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Prereq: ISMA 1500 with a C- or higher

**ISMA 3840 - Independent Study (1-3 Credits)**  
Note: Students must submit a special processing form completely filled out and signed by the student and faculty member, describing the course expectations, assignments and outcomes, to the CLAS undergraduate advising office for approval. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Repeatable. Max Hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Repeatable. Max Credits: 3.

**ISMA 3939 - Internship (1-3 Credits)**  
Designed experiences involving application of specific, relevant concepts and skills in supervised employment situations. Prereq: Students must have junior standing and at least a 2.75 GPA and must work with Experiential Learning Center advising to complete a course contract and gain approval. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Repeatable. Max Hours: 9 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Repeatable. Max Credits: 9.  
Prereq: Junior standing or higher and at least a 2.75 cumulative GPA

**ISMA 4500 - Interdisciplinary Learning Capstone (3 Credits)**  
This course brings together students who have been working on individualized majors to share a capstone experience. The goal is for students to integrate knowledge from their cluster and apply it to a project relevant to their field of interest. Prereq: ISMA 3500 with a C- or higher. Max hours: 3 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Prereq: ISMA 3500 with a C- or higher.

**ISMA 4840 - Independent Study (1-3 Credits)**  
Note: Students must submit a special processing form completely filled out and signed by the student and faculty member, describing the course expectations, assignments and outcomes, to the CLAS undergraduate advising office for approval. Repeatable. Max Hours: 3 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Repeatable. Max Credits: 3.

**ISMA 4880 - Directed Research (1-6 Credits)**  
Students will engage in original research projects supervised and mentored by faculty. Students must work with faculty prior to registration to develop a proposal for their project and receive permission to take this course. Note: Students must submit a special processing form completely filled out and signed by the student and faculty member, describing the course expectations, assignments and outcomes, to the CLAS undergraduate advising office for approval. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Repeatable. Max Hours: 6 Credits.  
Grading Basis: Letter Grade  
Repeatable. Max Credits: 6.

ISMA 4900 - Interdisciplinary Studies Capstone (3 Credits)

Students will be guided through the research process as they complete interdisciplinary capstone projects. They will receive feedback during each stage of the project's development and consultation from disciplinespecific faculty advisors. Prereq: ISMA 3100 with a C- or higher. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Prereq: ISMA 3100 with a C- or higher.