

Special Interdisciplinary Major (SIM) Guidelines



Arts &
Sciences

CCAS Undergraduate Studies Office
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About the Major

The Special Interdisciplinary Major (SIM) is available to students in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences whose academic goals cannot be met through one of the existing departmental majors or a combination of majors and minors.

To propose a SIM, students should devise a curriculum with intrinsic merit that matches the scope of established CCAS majors. This curriculum involves groups of courses that share a common outlook and methodology developed through a sequence of courses. Students proposing a SIM should consider the function and value of courses from different areas in designing their curriculum.

Curriculum Requirements

The proposed major will consist of the following core components:

- 1) A minimum of 36 and a maximum of 54 hours of upper-level coursework, including both required courses and elective courses
- 2) A minimum of 45 credit hours must be taken within the Columbian College
- 3) If relevant, at least one course in research skills is recommended
- 4) The successful completion of CCAS 4191: Special Interdisciplinary Capstone

Student Eligibility

To apply to pursue a SIM students must:

- 1) Have completed at least 30 credit hours and not more than 75 credits at GW at the time of the proposal
- 2) Hold a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- 3) Have achieved excellent grades in the areas that form the proposed major
- 4) Have been enrolled in the Columbian College for at least two semesters

Faculty Mentor and Faculty Committee

Students are responsible for identifying a faculty member to serve as primary mentor for the proposed major. The faculty mentor must:

- 1) Be a full-time regular faculty member in the Columbian College who will be present for the duration of the student's enrollment
- 2) Have expertise in the areas from which the curriculum will be drawn
- 3) Assist the student in the preparation of the proposal and the selection of a committee comprised of at least two and no more than four faculty who are knowledgeable in areas related to the major
- 4) Approve any changes or substitutions to the curriculum subsequent to its initial approval

Process for Proposing the Special Interdisciplinary Major

Students intending to propose a SIM should meet with their assigned academic advisor to review the process and discuss the feasibility of the proposed major. Next, students should work with their chosen faculty mentor and the members of their committee to prepare the proposal. Students are encouraged to meet with the Director of Academic Advising to discuss their SIM proposal more thoroughly in order to make sure there is a coherency with the coursework selected for the proposed major as well as feedback on the proposal overall. Completed proposals and supporting documents are to be submitted to the Dean's Office in Phillips Hall 107.

SIM proposals are examined closely by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the College, who will expect proposals to meet certain academic and procedural criteria.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee may do one of the following:

- 1) Approve the proposal in its entirety
- 2) Make suggestions for modification
- 3) Stipulate specific revisions
- 4) Reject the proposed program of study

The Proposal

Completed proposals should include the following:

- 1) A title (no more than 30 characters) that clearly describes the major. This is the title that will appear on the transcript and the diploma
- 2) An explanatory essay of no more than 1,000 words that presents a rationale for the major and that considers both the student's goals and the cohesiveness of the curriculum. The essay should address why the special interdisciplinary major has academic value and why existing majors or combinations of majors and minors do not meet its objectives. The essay should discuss the contribution of each set of courses to the overall concept of the major as well as be explicit as to which degree the student is pursuing; Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science
- 3) A completed plan of study form (attached) that identifies all courses for the proposed major
- 4) A complete four year plan that identifies all coursework required to complete the undergraduate degree including major, general education curriculum, and any coursework for a minor (if the student wishes to complete one)
- 5) A statement identifying the final assignment (comprehensive examination, thesis, research project) and the names of the faculty members who will participate in creating and evaluating the final assignment
- 6) Letters of support from the primary mentor and each committee member

Important Information Regarding Special Interdisciplinary Majors

1. Students may pursue a minor as part of their academic plan with a SIM, However, if not incorporated into the original proposal, the minor will require approval by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. The majority of coursework required for the minor cannot be completed by coursework also required for the SIM
2. Students granted approval to pursue a SIM may not declare a double major

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
Plan of Study for Special Interdisciplinary Major

Name: _____ Faculty Mentor: _____

Title of major: _____

List pre-requisite courses below:

List required courses by department below:

DEPT:	DEPT:	DEPT:	DEPT:

List tentative electives by department below:

DEPT:	DEPT:	DEPT:	DEPT:

Additional Information: _____
