

Student Designed

The student-designed major is an interdisciplinary major that exemplifies the mission of a liberal arts education. It is available to students who wish to develop a more individualized program of study than those provided by existing majors. The major is administered by the Associate Dean of Faculty, Calvert Hall 104a.

The student-designed major must be a coherent program of study that crosses disciplinary lines by combining courses from at least three disciplines. One of the major disciplines must be chosen as the primary discipline to provide a coherent focus for the major. The major should adhere to the same principles of breadth, depth, and liberal arts-centered inquiry that the faculty has established for existing majors.

Admission is granted to the major through the submission of a proposal to the college Curriculum Review Committee, which has the final authority to approve or deny proposals. In order to ensure a carefully planned and executed curriculum, students who are interested in declaring a student-designed major must submit their proposal by the time they have completed 56 credit hours.

Students wishing to pursue a student-designed major must meet with the student-designed major coordinator to discuss the goals and outline of the proposed major. Examples of past student-designed majors and sample templates are available for guidance purposes, but ultimately the design of the major course of study is the student's own responsibility. In planning the major and creating the proposal, the student must select an advisory committee of two faculty members, one from the primary discipline and one from one of the secondary disciplines. The student-designed major coordinator or his or her representative also serves on the advisory committee. To ensure a consistent level of ongoing coordination and guidance, if the major proposal is approved, one member of the advisory committee will become the student's academic adviser, and the student must subsequently organize one meeting per year with the committee as a whole.

Degree Requirements for the Major

General College Requirements

General College Requirements (see “Curriculum” section).

Designing the Major

A minimum of 48 credit hours of course work for the major, chosen from at least three disciplines (defined for this purpose as courses beginning with different alphabetic prefixes, such as ECON or ENGL). One of these “disciplines” can be a recognized Cross Disciplinary Study Area. The 48 credit hours must include:

- Five classes in the primary discipline, at least three of which must be upper division;
- Three additional upper-level classes, chosen from the secondary disciplines;
- At least one methods or theory course, as applicable, preferably chosen from the primary discipline;
- A St. Mary’s Project of eight credit hours;
- Elective credits to complete the required total of 48 credit hours.

Internship/Independent Study

No more than four hours of internship credit and four hours of Independent Study may be counted towards the major.

Minimum Grade and GPA Requirements

Students must earn a grade of C- or better in each course counted towards the major, and maintain an overall GPA of at least 2.0 in these courses.

Acceptance to the Program

All coursework must be chosen prior to acceptance to the program with approval from the advisory committee and final approval from the Curriculum Review Committee. Any later substitutions must be pre-approved by petition to the Curriculum Review Committee.