

Interdisciplinary Studies

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Director, [Jeffry Davis](#)

Interdisciplinary Studies Major

The Interdisciplinary Studies major promotes the educational goals of Christian liberal arts learning, emphasizing the importance of becoming a whole and effective human being who can integrate knowledge from various disciplines and express it with critical understanding, creative skill, and redemptive purpose. Students who become IDS majors complete their undergraduate education in an unconventional way, designing a unique “program of study.”

Once accepted to the program, the IDS major will submit a final version of the program of study that specifies upper-divisional course work from any two or three of the College’s existing academic majors, which must be approved by the IDS program director and IDS Faculty Committee. Thereafter, the program of study may not be altered by the student without the expressed written approval of the IDS program director. The program of study will directly relate to the student’s “guiding directive,” which represents the rationale for the IDS major’s integrative work. The guiding directive can answer a question, examine a problem, or explore a theme, forming the basis for the student’s choice of courses listed in the program of study. Courses selected for the program of study must be thematically congruous and reflect the ideal of a coherent, integrated whole. The culmination of the IDS major’s program of study will be the IDS research project, which will require the student to complete qualitative or quantitative research and writing on a topic related to the specified program of study. This final project will be completed in the IDS Senior Seminar, presented to peers, and evaluated by two faculty members knowledgeable with the topic. IDS majors often focus their projects on central issues pertaining to the arts, social sciences (including urban studies), humanities, natural sciences, HNGR, communication, modern culture, social policy, and the health professions, to name a few.

Interested students should apply to the IDS program during their sophomore year; no student may apply after the fourth week of the fourth semester prior to graduation. All applicants must complete a questionnaire (including student personality profile, short answer questions, and tentative program of study), a personal interview with the program director, and three essays. The completed application will then be submitted to the IDS administrative assistant by the scheduled deadline (near the end of each quad) and evaluated by the IDS Faculty Committee, which is comprised of the IDS director and various faculty across the disciplines. Students will then be informed of their standing. Candidates should understand that the application process is rigorous, and the IDS program is selective. Students are allowed to apply only twice to the

program.

Students who complete an Interdisciplinary Studies major are granted a Bachelor of Arts degree unless they request a Bachelor of Science degree **and** meet the following criteria:

- If the student chooses the two-discipline option, one of the disciplines must be in a field that offers a B.S. degree.
- If the student chooses the three-discipline option, two of the disciplines must be in a field that offers a B.S. degree.

Requirements for an Interdisciplinary Studies major are 36 hours beyond all general education requirements, including a minimum of 12 upper-division hours from each of any two disciplines or eight upper-division hours from each of any three disciplines and [IDS 494 Senior Seminar \(4 hours—only offered in the spring semester\)](#). One of the upper-division courses must be approved as an integrative or bridge course, clearly linking the chosen disciplines in the program of study. Internship hours do not apply towards the major.

There are also two IDS pre-established programs of study: one in [Asian Studies](#) and the other in [Biotechnology](#). Both are described below. Additional information is available from the respective coordinators.

IDS: Asian Studies

Coordinator, [Charles Weber \(History\)](#)

IDS: Asian Studies provides an academic focus on a strategic region that is home to one-third of the world's population. Asia consists of diverse and rich cultural, religious, and intellectual traditions. Asia's dynamic economic and political institutions make it a major force today.

Asian Studies draw upon the expertise and courses relevant to Asia that are available at the College. It provides academic training for fields such as diplomatic service, education, missions, religious studies, business, international law, journalism, and history, as well as graduate school. In addition, Asian Studies encourages various summer programs to Asia, including the [China Studies Program of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities](#).

The [Wheaton May-in-Asia program](#) also explores various Asian cultures and societies, focusing on a different part of Asia each year, such as Beijing, Bangkok, Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Singapore.

Requirements for IDS: Asian Studies are 36 hours beyond all general education requirements from the following three categories:

- Core Courses: 12 hours including [RELI 212 World Religions: Asia \(2\)](#), [PHIL 316 Asian Philosophy \(2\)](#), [HIST 334 East Asian History \(4\)](#), and other approved courses (4). See coordinators for listing of approved courses in this category.
- Electives: 20 hours selected from such courses as [RELI 364](#), [HIST 362](#), [363](#); [IR 357](#); [B EC 331](#), [366](#). See coordinator for complete listing of courses approved in this category.
- [IDS 494 Senior Seminar \(offered only in spring\)](#).

The requirements for a minor in Asian/American Studies are 20 hours, including six hours of [HIST 334](#), [391](#); four or six hours from [ENGL 201](#) (if on an Asian topic) or [PHIL 316](#); four or six

hours from [RELI 212](#), or [492](#); and four or six hours from [BEC 331](#), [366](#); [IDS 495](#), [HIST 362](#), [363](#).

IDS: Biotechnology

Coordinator, [Pattle Pun \(Biology\)](#)

The IDS: Biotechnology program of study examines salient issues pertaining to matters of human and scientific significance since the advent of genetic engineering. Biotechnology has far-reaching effects in all areas of fundamental biological research, as well as in agricultural, medical, environmental and industrial applications.

The demand for individuals with basic training in the relevant areas in biology and chemistry is rapidly increasing. Pressing moral issues such as stem cell research, cloning, gene enhancement and therapies, ownership of human genetic information, and genetically engineered organisms await thoughtful Christian engagement. To face these challenges, Wheaton students can major in IDS: Biotechnology.

Requirements for IDS: Biotechnology are 36 hours beyond all general education requirements from the following three categories:

- Core Courses in Biology: [BIOL 356 Genetics](#); [BIOL 364 Microbiology and Immunology](#); [BIOL 374 Bioinformatics](#)
- Core Courses in Chemistry: [CHEM 341 & 342 Organic Chemistry I & II](#); and [CHEM 461 General Biochemistry](#).
- Electives: may be chosen from [BIOL 317x Biomedical Ethics](#) (strongly recommended as the integrative or bridge course); [BIOL 352 Parasitology](#); [BIOL 362 Cell and Developmental Biology](#), and [CHEM 462 Advanced Biochemistry](#); Independent research ([BIOL 495](#) or [CHEM 495](#)); summer laboratory internship ([BIOL 496](#) or [CHEM 496](#)); or a programming course in Computer Science.
- [IDS 494 Senior Seminar \(only offered in the spring\)](#). NOTE: An integrated project on biotechnology, in which students synthesize a position based on sound ethical and theological reasoning about a controversial issue in biotechnology, is required for this senior capstone course.
- The following General Education courses are also recommended: [BITH 212](#); [BITH 438](#); [BITH 214](#); [BITH 462](#); [BITH 315](#); [PHIL 215](#) (or [PHIL 331](#) and [PHIL 347](#)); [PSCI 145](#); [PSYC 317](#); [B EC 211](#); and [HIST 111](#).

Interdisciplinary Studies Major Courses (IDS)

IDS 494. Senior Seminar. This capstone course provides the Interdisciplinary Studies major the opportunity for integration by means of interaction with other IDS majors. The seminar requires full participation of students through daily reading, writing, speaking, and listening—conducted according to a central theme and common texts, drawing upon the students' varied academic experiences. An integrative research project is mandatory—one that is qualitative, quantitative, or

creative, depending upon the major's program of study. Required of all IDS majors, and only offered in the spring semester, it should be taken just prior to graduation. (4)

IDS 495. Independent Study. A regimen of reading scholarly articles and writing abstract reviews is typical; however, this course also provides the IDS major with the opportunity for research to meet the individual's needs and interests, as approved by the Interdisciplinary Studies Director. IDS majors are strongly encouraged to take the independent study prior to the IDS Senior Seminar, as a means of preparation for the final IDS project. (2)

IDS 496. Internship. Graded pass/fail. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing within the Interdisciplinary Studies major. (4 or 8)

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