Department Website: http://ishum.uchicago.edu

Program of Study

The Bachelor of Arts degree program in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (ISHU) offers qualified undergraduates the opportunity to shape an interdisciplinary plan of course work centered in, but not necessarily restricted to, study in the humanities. The program is meant to accommodate a course of study that could not otherwise be carried out easily within the structures of a single disciplinary major.

One of the notable features of the program is the requirement that all ISHU majors complete a formal BA paper at the end of their term of study that integrates the disparate fields of each student's study in a truly interdisciplinary manner. A BA paper will normally consist of an analytical research paper. An alternative option is a creative BA project, which would be accompanied by an analytical write-up of the project's background, conceptual problem(s), and methodology.

To be considered for admission to this BA program, a student must submit an application. This application consists of the student's selection and rationalization of a plan of courses that form a discrete field of interdisciplinary study. (The specific materials and protocol necessary for the application are described below.) The application process is designed to make clear in each individual case what intellectual concerns are to be related to one another through interdisciplinary study and what method of comparative analysis is suited to such an approach.

Students should discuss plans and proposed courses with both the ISHU chair and College adviser. These meetings will help students evaluate the available courses of study to arrive at a balanced and coherent interdisciplinary plan.

Once a student is admitted to ISHU, she or he will come to have the support also of the BA preceptor and, by the end of the third year, a faculty BA adviser. The preceptor is typically a graduate student with interdisciplinary expertise who will help the student to progress towards successful completion of the degree program, including completion of the BA paper. The faculty adviser is a faculty member who has expertise in the student's main field of study, and agrees to supervise the development of the BA paper specifically. (The student is responsible for securing a faculty BA adviser, but can ask the ISHU staff for assistance in doing so.)

A student in the ISHU BA program will take courses in two or three academic departments, and it is common for ISHU majors to have two or three sets of chosen courses that do not intersect with each other at all. (Your program is interdisciplinary; your courses, individually, need not be interdisciplinary.) There is, however, a required structure to the distribution of courses that a student takes, and there are two specific courses that every ISHU major must take. These requirements are explained below.

Program Requirements

Each student's program of study must meet the following six distribution requirements. Students can ensure that these requirements are met by completing the application worksheet that is available from the ISHU College adviser or ishum.uchicago.edu:

1. Six courses in a primary field or in closely integrated subject areas in more than one field.
2. Three courses in a first supporting field or in closely integrated subject areas in more than one field.
3. Three courses in a second supporting field or in closely integrated subject areas in more than one field.

A "field" is defined in one of three ways: (a) a selection of courses from a traditional department (such as Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations or Philosophy), (b) a traditional discipline spread over more than one department (such as a "Theater" field containing South Asian Languages and Civilizations and Theater and Performance Studies courses), or (c) an interdisciplinary set of courses under a certain rubric (such as an "American studies" field containing courses from English, History, and Sociology, or a "Narrative/Storytelling" field containing courses from Romance or Slavic Languages and Literatures, Anthropology, and Psychology). Students are encouraged to create their six-course field from a single, traditional discipline, so that, however broad their program, they can also have some depth of learning in a single discipline.

Any one of the fields listed under (1), (2), and (3) may be drawn from outside the humanities.

4. Two courses or one sequence of two courses (drawn from offerings in the humanities) that emphasizes intellectual approaches or critical methods germane to a student's particular interdisciplinary course program.
5. ISHU 29802 The BA Colloquium in the Spring Quarter of the third year, which meets three times over the quarter and is taught by the ISHU BA preceptor. The purpose of this course is for each student to begin working on the structure and argument of the BA paper that he or she will complete the following year. At the end of the course, each student will have written a proposal for the BA paper, which will generally be a précis of the argument that the student anticipates making. Grading for this course is Pass/Fail (P/F) for all students.

Students should note that the course carries no numerical credit towards their degree (it is a "zero-unit" course). It cannot fill any role in the student's degree program other than the one it is designed to fill; it also cannot be an elective. Because it is a noncredit course, students must carry at least three additional courses while registered for ISHU 29802 in order to meet requirements for full-time student status. Regardless of these technical qualifications, the course is
compulsory for ISHU majors in their third year unless an exemption is granted for unusual circumstances, as such the
student's being in residence at a study-abroad program that quarter.

6. ISHU 29900 Preparation of the BA Project. This course is structured as an independent study. The instructor will
be the student's faculty BA adviser. It should be taken in the Autumn or Winter Quarter of fourth year, but in special
circumstances may be taken in Spring Quarter of fourth year. The faculty adviser will devise a plan of reading and
writing for the student and will critique drafts of the student's BA paper as they develop.

Summary of Requirements

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<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>Six primary field courses</td>
<td>600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three secondary field courses</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three supporting field courses</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Two critical/intellectual methods courses</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISHU 29802 The BA Colloquium</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISHU 29900 Preparation of the BA Project</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>1500</strong></td>
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Personal Statement

The first part of the proposal consists of a personal reflective statement of approximately 500 to 1,000 words in length, explaining the character of their interdisciplinary interests and stating as thoughtfully as possible how they propose to channel and expand them within course offerings currently available. Some consideration of prospects and possibilities for a BA paper or project is a desirable part of these statements, if it can be provided.

Course Prospectus

The second part of the proposal consists of a list of courses to fill the headings given in the above set of guidelines. This list will include courses the student has already taken as well as ones he or she intends to take. While a list of courses the student proposes to take is a required part of the application, it is understood that these will undergo modification. Any changes to the course prospectus should be discussed with (and approved by) the College adviser.

After the application materials have been reviewed by the ISHU chair and academic adviser, a twenty-minute interview will be scheduled with the ISHU chair. The ISHU chair will inform the student via email of the result of the application.

Grading

All courses in the major must be taken for a quality grade (that is, A, B, C, D, or F, with + and – grades), with the exception of the zero-unit course ISHU 29802 The BA Colloquium, for which students will receive a grade of Pass or Fail.

Honors

To be eligible for honors, a student must maintain an overall GPA of 3.25 or higher and a GPA in the major of 3.5 or higher. Honors are reserved for the student whose BA project shows exceptional intellectual merit in the judgment of the faculty adviser, ISHU chair, and master of the Humanities Collegiate Division.

Advising

Close contact with the faculty and staff relevant to the student's career in ISHU—including the ISHU College adviser, chair, and preceptor, and the faculty adviser of the BA paper—is essential in a program that involves so much individual initiative and experimentation. Students are encouraged to seek their advice whenever they have an intellectual or practical concern about progress in the major.

Faculty

Since ISHU is an interdisciplinary major whose field of study encompasses all the offerings in the various departments and programs of the University (particularly in the Humanities Division), all faculty members of these varied departments and programs are related to ISHU. ISHU students may approach any University of Chicago faculty member who works in his or her field of interest with a request to serve as faculty adviser for the BA paper. Similarly, ISHU students may take courses with any faculty member from any department of the University.

Courses

For the same reason—that ISHU is an interdisciplinary major whose field of study encompasses all the offerings in the various departments and programs of the University (particularly in the Humanities Division)—all substantive and methodology courses offered in these varied departments and programs are viable courses for the program. ISHU students may take any courses offered in the University that fit in with their program of study, provided these are approved by the ISHU College adviser and chair.

In addition to the above courses that are grounded in particular fields of study, the program requires all ISHU students to take two courses that are related to the preparation of the BA paper:

**ISHU 29802. The BA Colloquium. 000 Units.**

Required of third-year students who are majoring in ISHU. This zero-unit, noncredit course must be taken for P/F grading. To meet requirements for full-time student status, students must carry at least three additional courses while registered for this course.

Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): Consent of ISHU College adviser and chair

Note(s): Required of third-year students who are majoring in ISHU. This zero-unit, noncredit course must be taken for P/F grading. To meet requirements for full-time student status, students must carry at least three additional courses while registered for this course.

**ISHU 29900. Preparation of the BA Project. 100 Units.**

No description available.

Instructor(s): Staff

Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter

Prerequisite(s): Consent of faculty adviser and ISHU chair

Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.

More details of these two courses have been provided earlier in the Program Requirements section.

Moreover, inasmuch as the ability to write clear, effective prose is part of the essential skill set required of the humanist endeavor, ISHU students are encouraged (but not required) to take a course on academic writing such as:
ENGL 13000. Academic and Professional Writing (The Little Red Schoolhouse) 100 Units.

Academic and Professional Writing, a.k.a. “The Little Red Schoolhouse” or “LRS” (English 13000/33000) is an advanced writing course for third- and fourth-year undergraduates who are taking courses in their majors or concentrations, as well as graduate students in all of the divisions and university professional programs. LRS helps writers communicate complex and difficult material clearly to a wide variety of expert and non-expert readers. It is designed to prepare students for the demands of academic writing at various levels, from the B.A. thesis to the academic article or book—and for the tasks of writing in professional contexts.

Instructor(s): L. McEnerney, K. Cochran, T. Weiner Terms Offered: Spring Winter

Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing

Note(s): This course does not count towards the ISHU program requirements. May be taken for P/F grading by students who are not majoring in English. Materials fee $20.

Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 33000
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.