

# BECOMING AN IDS or AMST MAJOR

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND AMERICAN STUDIES

## A Major to Meet your Intellectual Passion

The ILA: where majors speak to each other

***Interdisciplinarity:** bridges between disciplines manifest themselves in inventions, insights, form-creating discoveries, public responsibility: an intellectual pursuit becomes an education in citizenship.*

Under the auspices of Emory's Institute for the Liberal Arts, IDS and AMST are the only Majors at Emory University that allow students to structure their own program of study around a field of interest that they themselves define, in close consultation with faculty experts from different disciplines who have specific training in interdisciplinary study. The IDS and AMST Majors are designed for independently minded students whose interests are broader than those accommodated by a single discipline. As part of these Majors, students are permitted to take courses in a number of departments, provided they meet appropriate departmental prerequisites.

### **Independence and Intensive Faculty Advising**

At the level of student experience, the most distinctive feature of the IDS or AMST Majors is intensive faculty advising. Unlike other disciplines, the ILA, as interdisciplinary in principle, does not structure our Majors on a preconceived notion of a field; hence, we do not rely on the notions of coverage, subfields, or canonical works. Structure and rigor in a student's experience grows from a student's intellectual passions and is insured by faculty advisors with relevant expertise.

The IDS and AMST Majors serve students who:

- have looked carefully at other majors but perceive some limitation in those majors to their ability to study a particular question or topic about which they are very passionate;
- are looking for a way to combine two or three particular disciplinary interests; *and/or*
- are interested and highly motivated to shape their own educational experience and to pursue a research project that is unique and distinctive.

From initial informational meetings, through the senior project required of all students, the DUS and core ILA faculty work closely with each student, generally meeting individually with every major two or more times per semester. These individualized meetings focus on course selection consistent with the student's emerging interdisciplinary project, as well as on the process of finding faculty mentors within and beyond the ILA who can be consulted as the student gains course training and begins research on the IDS project.

Upon declaring the Major, every IDS and AMST major prepares a proposal for his/her course requirements in the major. Students are advised on this proposal by two to four faculty, to whom the student is introduced by the DUS, and who have expertise relevant to the students' interdisciplinary topic(s) of interest. The proposal is reviewed and approved by an ILA undergraduate committee. The proposal serves as a blueprint, which is revisited each semester with the DUS or other ILA faculty advisors, to see if the proposed plan is still leading the student toward a focused senior project, and to assess new possible course options that may have arisen since the proposal was first submitted; study abroad often opens unforeseen options, for example. Changes to the proposal require written petition, subject to approval by the ILA undergraduate committee.

As the student enters spring of junior year, the process of preparing the senior project intensifies, first in IDS 390, a research design course focused individually on the student's senior project, enhanced by a specific look at literature about the processes and strategies of interdisciplinary research. Examples of interdisciplinary work by Emory faculty scholars are also studied in IDS 390. In addition, during the junior and early senior year, the DUS and other ILA faculty advisors coach the student both on building a faculty committee, a team of mentors, and on setting and keeping to a research time line.

Thus, each student's course of study in IDS and AMST, each culminating IDS and AMST project, involves intensive individualized advising and faculty oversight, provided primarily by the DUS and other ILA faculty advisors, and secondarily (with facilitation by ILA advisors), by faculty experts relevant to the student's project in departments other than the ILA.

### **Substance of Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Study at Emory**

Undergraduate interdisciplinary study proceeds on the hypothesis that some, if not all, subjects require methodologies, evidence, or texts drawn from more than one discipline, if they are to be understood deeply. Four pillars structure each student's experience in the undergraduate programs of the ILA:

- an informed perspective on the history, inter-relationship, and contested nature of disciplinary boundaries, specifically with reference to social structures and debates surrounding education and higher education

- a focus on writing as a crucial dimension of fully engaged reading, understanding, and public scholarship
- vibrant co-teaching as a model and embodiment of interdisciplinary inquiry and learning at the undergraduate level
- public scholarship—understood as the dissemination or application of the research to a public that extends beyond the academic student-professor relationship, either to the broader Emory community or, beyond Emory, to publics in Atlanta or broader society

## **Core Faculty**

### **Director of the ILA**

Mark Risjord

### **Director of Undergraduate Studies**

Peter W. Wakefield

### **Director of AMST and the IDEAS Fellowship**

Kim Loudermilk

### **Director of Science and Society Program**

Arri Eisen

## Detailed Requirements

IDS and AMST Major declaration requires approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Director of American Studies. Approval will be based on a student's preparation of a detailed Proposal for the Major (see worksheet at the end of this Handbook). The DUS will help the student get in touch with faculty advisors who have expertise in the student's areas of interdisciplinary interest, and the advisors will help the student prepare the Proposal.

A total of 44 credits is required for the IDS Major, similarly 44 credits for the AMST Major. These credits are earned in classes of two sorts: Concentration Courses and Frame Courses.

### *Concentration Courses*

At least seven of the major's required courses (at least 24 credits) constitute the student's individualized concentration. This list of at least seven courses is designed in close consultation with an ILA Core Faculty advisor and a faculty co-advisor with expertise relevant to a student's individual interdisciplinary research interests.

The concentration courses prepare a student to carry out research into a question that is best illuminated by two or more disciplinary methods. Skills and research launched in the concentration courses culminate in the required IDS or AMST senior project.

### *Frame Courses*

Writing as a skill for reflective reading and clear articulation of thought is crucial to success within the IDS and AMST majors. Frame courses provide structure to a student's experience within the major by emphasizing writing skills and by presenting examples of analysis and illumination of intellectual problems through the methods and resources of multiple disciplines.

- Any 2 of the following:
  - IDS 200W
  - IDS 205W
  - IDS 216W
  - AMST 201W (required for AMST majors)
  - or an equivalent course, upon consultation with and approval by the IDS undergraduate committee.\*

Note: AMST majors must take AMST 201. ENG 223 is co-requisite with all of the preceding courses.

- A 300-level IDS or AMST course, or other credit-bearing interdisciplinary activities totaling at least 3 credits, approved by the ILA undergraduate committee.

Students will discuss their 300-level Frame Requirement course carefully with their co-advisors; courses satisfying this requirement should give students a higher level experience within one or more of the disciplines relevant to their IDS concentration and eventual senior project.

- Two courses focused on the senior project and capstone year are required:
  - IDS 390 Junior Tutorial (this course discusses interdisciplinary method extensively, with particular application to students' individual senior IDS projects)
  - IDS 491/AMST 490 Senior Seminar

## **IDS & AMST Senior Project**

As a synthesis of a student's course of study, and as a credential demonstrating a student's ability to organize complex ideas and to carry out a sustained research project with close faculty consultation, each IDS and AMST student completes a significant interdisciplinary senior project. Senior projects frequently involve scholarly research, but can be composed of research and other forms of scholarship, such as artistic expression or other forms of broader public engagement. Students plan their projects in IDS 390 in spring of junior year, then write a significant portion of their projects for presentation in the senior capstone seminar. If a student meets other requirements set by the Honors Program (e.g.  $\geq 3.5$  GPA), the Senior Project can count as the Honors Project. (Note: Honors candidates are required by the Honors Program to take IDS 495 or AMST 495 Honors Research and a graduate level course or the ILA Proseminar, in addition to all Major requirements. Non-honors major may take IDS 499R Senior Research, earning credit for work on the senior project; IDS 499R requires that the student submit a one-page outline for ILA files of the work that will be done as part of this research credit, including frequency of meetings with advisors, writing to be submitted as part of the semester's grade, and deadlines.)

### Details of Senior Honors Project

Honors students must meet all requirements set by the Honors Program, in particular maintenance of a 3.5 or better GPA, in addition to adherence to the following ILA guidelines.

The senior year capstone seminar experience will initiate a thesis to be revised and completed in the senior year that will count as the Honors Thesis. Default is Chicago style, unless your supervisor asks for another. Scheduling of due-dates for drafts, etc. should be discussed with your main advisor and members of the committee, but the following schedule will serve as a good rule of thumb: Penultimate draft generally due to main advisor by March 25, final draft at least 10 days before defense: approximately April 6. Honors Defense at least a week before the final Honors due date.

Length is variable, but minimum is 50 pages. Public presentation: mandatory, at the yearly spring Undergraduate Research Symposium (generally held in mid-April). Oral Defense: mandatory--arrange date in close consultation with your main advisor and the DUS. Please, be sure to make one *extra copy* of the thesis and hand it in to the ILA office so that we have a departmental record of your work; we will make it available to students who follow you, unless you specify otherwise. Further requirements: successful completion of a graduate level-course with a grade of B or better.

## **Language Requirement**

For IDS majors: competence or courses in a nonnative foreign language equivalent to one semester beyond the 102 level. This requirement is applicable to AMST students when deemed appropriate by faculty advisors.

## **Proposal to Become an IDS or AMST Major**

The Proposal should include the following Checklist of Courses, as well as a separate page explaining the rationale and intellectual goals of your IDS or AMST Major. Proposals will be reviewed by ILA faculty and by your co-advisor.

## The IDS or AMST Major's **CHECKLIST OF COURSES/ Proposal**

(44 credits, at least 12 courses bearing 3 or more credits each)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ 7-digit ID \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_@emory.edu Estimated graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Two faculty Co-advisors** (signed form (last page, below), or email confirmation)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Five Frame Courses (at least 20 credits)

- Any 2 of the following:
  - IDS 200W
  - IDS 205W
  - IDS 216W
  - AMST 201W
  - or an equivalent course, upon consultation with and approval by the ILA undergraduate committee.\*

Note: AMST majors must take AMST 201. ENG 223 is co-requisite with the preceding courses.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester instructor

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/year Instructor

- A 300-level IDS or AMST course, or other credit-bearing interdisciplinary activities totaling at least 3 credits, approved by the IDS undergraduate committee.

Students will discuss their 300-level Frame Requirement course carefully with their co-advisors; courses satisfying this requirement should give students a higher level experience within one or more of the disciplines relevant to their IDS concentration and eventual senior project.

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester instructor

IDS 390 Junior Tutorial (spring of junior year)

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
semesters director

IDS 491/AMST 490 Senior Seminar (fall of senior year)

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Intending to stand for Honors (requires  $\geq 3.5$  GPA):  
yes/no ? (circle)

### Seven (or more) Concentration Courses

(at least 24 credits; chosen in consultation with faculty co-advisors, subject to approval)

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

7. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

8. \_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

\_\_\_\_\_  
title/credits

**On an attached sheet, explain the cohesion of the concentration courses you have chosen, the intellectual goals of your IDS major, and the senior year project you hope to carry out.**

### Foreign Language Requirement

Competence or courses in a nonnative foreign language equivalent to one semester beyond the 102 level, applicable to AMST students when deemed appropriate by faculty advisors.

\_\_\_\_\_  
course/semester

### **Desired Learning Outcomes of the IDS and AMST Majors**

Students graduating with an IDS or an AMST major will be able:

- a) to identify and articulate an important problem or research question the understanding of which is enhanced by drawing on two or more disciplines represented
- b) to explain the cohesiveness of their concentration courses, stating methodological principles of the disciplines studied in relation to the history and fluidity of those disciplines and in relation to his/her interdisciplinary research question
- c) to engage in advanced interdisciplinary undergraduate research, in close consultation with interdisciplinary faculty advisors, articulating this research in clear, scholarly prose
- d) to identify the features of his/her interdisciplinary research that constitute public scholarship—understood as the dissemination or application of the research to a public that extends beyond the academic student-professor relationship, either to the broader Emory community or, beyond Emory, to publics in Atlanta or broader society.

Faculty advisors and the director of undergraduate studies will work with all majors over the course of their career in the IDS program to insure that these goals are met.

**AMST Majors** focus the preceding learning goals, especially their research question and senior project, on an interdisciplinary topic focused on the U.S. or the broader Americas.

**Interdisciplinary Studies Major (IDS)  
American Studies Major (AMST)**

**Faculty Co-Advisor Consent Form**

To the potential faculty co-advisor:

Changes to the IDS & AMST Majors approved by Curriculum Committee in fall 2015 provide for each student to have two co-advisors, one of whom is generally an ILA core faculty member, the other a faculty member who has expertise and interest in the student's specific proposed interdisciplinary research question. The proposed research question is developed and honed through relevant course work across a student's career at Emory and leads to a student's senior year IDS or AMST project.

By agreeing to serve as co-advisor to a student who is an IDS or AMST major, your primary role will be to give expert reflection and advice on the student's course of study and eventual senior project as these develop.

In concrete terms, students are encouraged to consult with their co-advisors briefly each semester (15 minutes), to discuss progress in the IDS Major and class choices for the next semester, especially in light of unforeseen changes (e.g. a class projected by the student's proposal is not offered, or a better class happens to be offered). Agreeing to serve as a co-advisor for an IDS or AMST major does *not* commit you to serving formally on a student's senior project committee, though the student may approach you later for such further commitment.

**Name of student:**

**Student's Major (IDS or AMST):**

**Interdisciplinary research question or potential senior project title:**

**I agree to serve as co-advisor to the student whose interdisciplinary project is specified above:**

**Signature:**

**Printed name:**

**Date:**