

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 significant, scholarly, researched senior thesis that is unique and distinctive

From initial informational meetings through the senior thesis 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 senior thesis, 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 thesis.

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 thesis, 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 are fairly simple, but require written petition (by email to the DUS), and are subject to approval by the ILA undergraduate committee.

As the student enters spring of junior year, the process of preparing the senior thesis intensifies, first in IDS 390 Interdisciplinary Research Design, a tutorial course focused individually on the student's senior thesis, enhanced by a specific look at literature about the processes and strategies of interdisciplinary research. IDS 390 will require you to refine your thesis statement, build a scholarly bibliography, enlist faculty advisors, outline your thesis, and, at the end of the semester, present your proposed plan for a senior thesis to a public audience, as part of the annual ILA Spring Undergraduate Research Symposium—at which attendance is mandatory for all AMST and IDS majors.

Thus, each student's course of study in IDS and AMST, each culminating IDS and AMST thesis, 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 thesis 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 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 more widely dispersed.

Core Faculty

Director of the ILA

Robyn Fivush

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Peter W. Wakefield

Director of AMST and the IDEAS Fellowship

Kim Loudermilk

Director of Science and Society Program

Arri Eisen

Additional ILA Core Faculty

Mark Risjord

Katie Schank, ILA Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow, 2019-2022

Detailed Requirements

Students should declare the AMST or IDS major via the online form available through the Emory College Office of Undergraduate Education. Generally, this online declaration is best made after an initial meeting with the DUS in the ILA. Online declarations will not be approved until the following process is followed.

IDS and AMST major declaration requires approval of the ILA Undergraduate Committee. Approval will be based on a student's preparation of a detailed Proposal for the major (see worksheet, p. 7 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 either the AMST or IDS 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 thesis.

Put another way, the methods a student wishes to use in the senior thesis must have been learned beforehand in specific courses included in the proposed concentration. For example, a student who wants to include interviews or surveys in a senior thesis must have been trained to do so in a relevant social science course before senior year.

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 201-OX
 - IDS 205W
 - IDS 216W or IDS 216 or IDS 216-OX
 - AMST 201W or AMST 201-OX (required for AMST majors)
 - or an equivalent course, upon consultation with and approval by the ILA undergraduate committee.

Note: AMST majors must take AMST 201.

ENG 223 Rhetorical Grammar (1-credit, S/U) is co-requisite with all of the preceding courses, except Oxford courses. Oxford continuees will be required to take ENG 223 when they arrive at Emory College, either as co-requisite to one of the previous courses (in the case that they have taken only one Frame Requirement at Oxford) or as a separate requirement to complete the major.

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

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

- Two courses focused on the senior thesis and capstone year are required:
 - IDS 390 Interdisciplinary Research Design (this course discusses interdisciplinary method extensively, with particular application to students' individual senior IDS or AMST theses)
 - IDS 491/AMST 490 Senior Seminar

IDS & AMST Senior Thesis

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 thesis with close faculty consultation, each IDS and AMST student completes a significant, scholarly, interdisciplinary senior thesis. Senior theses primarily involve scholarly research, but can be complemented by other forms of scholarship, such as artistic expression or other forms of broader public engagement. Students plan their senior research and thesis in IDS 390 in spring of junior year, then teach a class session on their research and turn in a portion of their thesis as the final paper for the Senior Seminar in fall of senior year; the senior seminar involves study of interdisciplinarity as well.

Honors & Senior Research

If a student meets other requirements set by the Honors Program (e.g. ≥ 3.5 GPA), the AMST or IDS Senior Thesis can count as the Honors Thesis. (Note: Honors candidates are required by the Honors Program to take IDS 495 or AMST 495 Honors Research (at least once, optionally twice) and a graduate level course or the ILA Proseminar, in addition to all major requirements.

Non-honors majors must take IDS 499R Senior Research, 1-3 credits, in spring of senior year, earning credit for work on the senior thesis.

All ILA research courses (including 495 or 499) require 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 Thesis and Capstone (non-honors) Thesis

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. Review the Honors Program website for details and FAQ's.

The fall semester, senior year capstone seminar includes producing a significant portion of the thesis, which will be revised and completed in spring of senior year and will count as the Honors or Capstone (non-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.

Honors candidates: the following schedule will serve as a good rule of thumb for spring of senior year: penultimate draft generally due to main advisor by March 25, final draft at least 10 days before defense. Defense, usually around April 6. Honors Defense at least a week before the final Honors due date—be sure to check Honors due date with the Honors Program, as it varies slightly each year.

Capstone (non-honors) theses do not require an oral defense.

Length is variable, but minimum is *50 pages for Honors Theses; 30-50 pages for non-honors.*

Public presentation of thesis proposals is mandatory for all juniors as part of IDS 390. Senior Honors candidates must also present their finished thesis and research results. All of these presentations occur at the yearly ILA Spring Undergraduate Research Symposium (generally held in mid-late April). All AMST and IDS majors must attend the Symposium.

Oral Defense: mandatory for Honors Theses; not required for Capstone (non-honors) Theses. Honors candidates must arrange the defense date in close consultation with their main advisor and the DUS.

Honors and non-honors students must supply 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 Honors requirements: successful completion of a graduate level-course with a grade of B or better, or successful completion of the two-semester ILA Proseminar (one credit per semester in senior year).

Language Requirement

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

Transient Study

AMST/IDS students may be allowed to count up to two courses of transient study toward their Concentration Requirements, with submission of syllabi to, and upon approval by the ILA Undergraduate Committee.

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)

Use this page as a planning worksheet to create a draft. Submit your final Checklist/Proposal online at <http://ila.emory.edu/programs/checklist-courses.html>

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 18 credits)

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

Note: AMST majors must take AMST 201.
ENG 223 Rhetorical Grammar (1-credit, S/U) is co-requisite with all of the preceding courses, except Oxford courses. Oxford continuees will be required to take ENG 223 when they arrive at Emory College, either as co-requisite to one of the previous courses (in the case that they have taken only one Frame Requirement at Oxford) or as a separate requirement to complete the major.

1. _____ instructor
course/semester

2. _____ Instructor
course/year

- 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, theoretical, interdisciplinary experience within one or more of the disciplines relevant to their AMST/IDS concentration and eventual senior thesis.

3. _____ instructor
course/semester

IDS 390 Interdisciplinary Research Design
(spring of junior year)

4. _____ director
semesters

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

5. _____

Senior Thesis Title: _____

Intending to stand for Honors (requires ≥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 thesis 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 more widely dispersed.

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

AMST majors focus the preceding learning goals, especially their research question and senior thesis, on an interdisciplinary topic concerned with 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 thesis.

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 thesis 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 subsequent 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 thesis 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 thesis title:

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

Signature:

Printed name:

Date: