Self-Designed Interdisciplinary Major

Hanover students may choose to create a self-designed interdisciplinary major that joins two or more liberal arts disciplines in the analysis of a specific set of questions. (Given the intellectual challenges of a self-designed interdisciplinary major, it is recommended that a student have a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or higher.) Students planning a self-designed major should make suitable arrangements early enough in their college career so that they can write a proposal and file for the major by February of their sophomore year. To initiate a self-designed major, a student will develop a tentative set of courses for the major. As with other interdisciplinary majors, the student must design a major that has a central disciplinary core and methodology. The student should approach a faculty member who teaches in the core discipline (or the division head for the core discipline) with whom to discuss the proposed major. The student, faculty member, and division head will discuss the proposal and possible faculty members to serve on an advisory committee. After discussion and consultation, the division head will appoint a faculty advisor and two additional faculty members from disciplines included in the major to serve on the faculty advisory committee. The student and faculty advisory committee will discuss and, if necessary, revise the proposed set of courses. The student will then write a proposal for the self-designed major. This proposal must:

1. Suggest a name for the proposed major.

2. Include a rationale for the planned major course of study, a statement of the student's curricular objectives, including competencies to be developed, the core questions that are to be explored, a clearly defined link between the disciplines involved, a statement explaining why this major is in the spirit of the liberal arts (and not occupational training), and the rationale for the courses that are included in the program of study.

3. Provide a plan of study that includes:

   coursework dealing with the epistemology and the theory (or abstract conceptualization) within one of the disciplines;

   a total of not less than ten courses (alternative courses developing similar competencies can be suggested, such as ECO 113 or ECO 114);

   at least six courses above the introductory level unless the faculty advisory committee recognizes a compelling reason that this is not feasible;

   an indication of the discipline in which the student expects to do the independent study capstone experience. (The independent study should normally be in the core discipline); and

   a comprehensive examination to be taken during the student’s senior year.

4. Include a copy of the student’s transcript.
After the proposal is completed and signed by the three faculty members on the advisory committee, the proposal is to be submitted to the division head for approval. The division head will then forward the proposal to the Curriculum Committee for final approval.

Once the Curriculum Committee approves a proposal, it will serve as the student’s course of study. The faculty advisory committee members and the Student Academic Assistance Committee must approve any variance in coursework.