

Interdisciplinary Studies

College of Letters and Science (<http://ls.berkeley.edu>)

Field Major Office: Undergraduate and Interdisciplinary Studies, 231 Evans Hall, (510) 643-7691

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Department Website: Interdisciplinary Studies
(<http://www.ls.berkeley.edu/ugis/isf>)

The Interdisciplinary Studies Field (ISF) Major

The Interdisciplinary Studies Field (ISF) major offers students the opportunity to develop an individualized research program. With the help of an ISF faculty adviser, students use courses from the social sciences, the professional schools and colleges or the humanities in order to pursue their research. Typically, students select courses from three disciplines. In addition, the ISF major offers a capstone experience in that all students will research and write a substantive thesis. The research program must meet three criteria:

1. First, it must be interdisciplinary. This means that the research area must integrate approaches from at least three fields or disciplines. The principle of integration can be comparative, transnational, historical, geographic, or thematic.
2. Second, the research area must not replicate an existing major. The purpose of the ISF major is to enable research interests of undergraduates in areas in which no formal program exists.
3. Third, the area of research must be feasible. Each student's proposed research program must be discussed with a faculty adviser to make sure that the range and number of courses required will be available.

The field major is administered by a faculty advisory committee and is one of the programs of the Office of Undergraduate and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Admission to the Major

Students should apply to the major before or during the first semester of their junior year. Students will be considered for the Interdisciplinary Studies Field major on the basis of the appropriateness of their proposed area of research, the quality of their previous work in relevant courses, and their overall promise for interdisciplinary work. Candidates for the major should discuss their individual research proposal with an ISF faculty member before submitting an application. Applications will be accepted throughout the semester.

Major Requirements

Lower Division Requirements

One year (two courses) to fulfill the World Civilizations prerequisite requirement. A description of the types of courses that may be used to fulfill the requirement are listed in the ISF student handbook, which is available on the ISF web page or outside 263 Evans Hall. World Civilizations equivalent courses may be discussed with ISF faculty

advisers. The World Civilization requirement must be taken for a letter grade.

Upper Division Requirements

Thirty units distributed among the following:

1. **Area of Research:** A minimum of 20 upper division units (at least six courses) drawn from at least three fields or disciplines. Examples of research areas are available on the ISF website or in the ISF student handbook.
2. **Core Theory and Methodology Courses:** Students in the major must take ISF 100A, Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis. In addition, students must take one of the following courses: ISF 100B, Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis; ISF 100C, Word and Image; ISF 100D, Introduction to Technology, Society and Culture; ISF 100E, The Globalization of Rights, Values, and Laws in the 21st Century; or ISF 100F, Theorizing Modern Capitalism: Controversies and Interpretations. In addition, lists of supplemental courses from various departments across campus that may be used to fulfill the second methodology requirement will be available each semester outside 263 Evans Hall.
3. **Thesis Requirement:** ISF 190, Senior Thesis. Research and writing of a senior thesis (30-40 pages) that pertains to the student's area of research.

Honors Program

All honors students enroll in the senior thesis seminar with other majors (ISF 190); there will no longer be a separate Honors Thesis Seminar (ISF H195). Senior Honors Theses that receive honors will be no different in length and baseline requirements than other ISF Senior Theses, although they will inevitably use more primary and secondary sources, employ a more sophisticated methodology, and offer more rigorous and sophisticated interpretations. Students seeking Honors will still need to identify and seek out Senate Faculty members from other departments for advice and to serve as Second Readers. Their grades in ISF 190 will still be constituted by an average of grades assigned by the ISF 190 Instructor and the Second Readers.

Students eligible for honors must still have an overall GPA of at least 3.6, including in ISF courses. But the degree of honors in ISF will no longer be tied to a particular GPA. Instead, students in the Honors Option will be nominated for a degree of honors (Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors) by the ISF instructor, or the Second Reader, or another ladder faculty member.

The assessment of the degree of honors will be made by an ISF Honors Committee consisting of no fewer than two teaching faculty of the ISF Program and two Academic Senate Members under the oversight of the ISF Director. The ISF Honors Committee will use the criteria of scholarly originality, methodological sophistication (including interdisciplinarity), the quality of source interpretation, and excellence in writing and argumentation to adjudicate the degree of honors to be conferred. To allow adequate time for the Honors Committee to assess and review the Senior Honors Theses, students seeking Honors will be required to turn in their final Senior Theses at the beginning of Reading/Review/Recitation Week (in Spring 2014, the due date is May 5, 2014).

ISF 39A Freshman/Sophomore Seminar 1.5 - 4 Units

Department: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and spring

Grading: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

Hours and format: Seminar format.

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and a group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester. Enrollment limits are set by the faculty, but the suggested limit is 25.

Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

ISF 39B Freshman/Sophomore Seminar 1.5 - 4 Units

Department: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and spring

Grading: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

Hours and format: Seminar format.

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and a group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester. Enrollment limits are set by the faculty, but the suggested limit is 25.

Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

**ISF 61 Moral Reasoning and Human Action: The Quest for Judgment
3 Units**

Department: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and spring

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

This is an interdisciplinary survey course that seeks to understand how we define justice, evil, and individual responsibility in modern society. In particular we are going to probe carefully how humans reflect on and practice the process of moral reasoning. We will focus on human behavior in extreme situations: war, life and death conflicts, genocide and mass killing, as well as competing conceptions of human freedom. The course has a distinctive dual purpose. On the one hand we want to encourage the learning of critical thinking skills. This includes the ability to systematically evaluate information and competing moral claims. Also, it is intended as an exposure to the interdisciplinary approach. That is, how can different perspectives illuminate the same issue? With this in mind the course draws on important work from philosophy and ethics, social psychology, jurisprudential analysis, historical-political accounts, and personal memoirs.

**ISF 62 Representations of Self-Deception in the Modern World 3
Units**

Department: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and spring

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

In this course, we will utilize works in the humanities and the social sciences in order to explore a number of dimensions of self-deception in the modern world. The focus will be upon the willingness to falsify both personal life as well as one's position in the public sphere. The course will begin with an examination of the psychological dimension, emphasizing the importance of the nature of unconscious experience. In this context, we will examine how self-awareness is shaped by personal relationships,