

Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities

The Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities (IPH) is a rigorous program for highly motivated students whose interests draw them beyond traditional academic categories. The major, which usually leads to a degree with honors, combines an introductory core — a focused study of texts central to the European, American and Asian philosophical, religious and literary traditions — with an area of concentration: an advanced cluster of courses and research tailored to the special interests of each student in the program. For students pursuing concentrations in, for example, American intellectual history, in the European avant-garde in the 20th century, or in Renaissance political thought (to take three among many possible concentrations), the introductory core provides a crucial foundation for advanced interdisciplinary work. The core also provides a useful background for students undertaking comparative concentrations in such topics as encounters between East Asian and Western medical traditions or the literature of mysticism.

All students in the major learn to write and speak clearly and flexibly. They are given broad exposure to a range of canonical texts, and they engage in the historical and formal analysis of those and many other texts. They become skilled at research in at least one foreign language, and they are given considerable experience in creative, independent scholarly inquiry. Their work in the humanities bridges disciplines and fosters in them the two fundamental interpretive skills of contextualization and criticism. Students in the program will be well prepared for a range of graduate programs in the humanities, for professional careers in law and public service, and for the vital work of critical citizenship and life-long intellectual discovery.

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