

Beyond Boundaries Program

Program Overview

The Beyond Boundaries Program is a two- or four-year program that allows students to be a part of an ecosystem of interdisciplinary scholars intent on problem solving through cross-discipline collaboration.

The Beyond Boundaries Program will prepare student scholars to engage in interdisciplinary teams and will center around three pillars:

1. Academic preparation for interdisciplinary work
2. Ecosystem of scholars intent on problem solving through cross-discipline collaboration
3. Ongoing support across four years at Washington University

Throughout their time in the program, students will focus on three questions:

1. What role(s) do I want to play on collaborative problem-solving teams?
2. What skills, knowledge, and partnerships are necessary for interdisciplinary work?
3. How can I use my time at Washington University to grow these skills?

Learning Objectives

Students participating in the Beyond Boundaries Program will be able to do the following:

- Describe the value of interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving.
- Apply disciplinary perspectives to interdisciplinary problem solving.
- Assemble interdisciplinary teams around a problem or subject.
- Design interventions/solutions based on interdisciplinary perspectives.
- Facilitate and organize collaborative teams.

Program Completion

Students who participate in and complete the program requirements for their first two years will receive a milestone notation on their official transcript. A description of specific program requirements can be found on the Curriculum tab of this page.

Program students then have the option to leave the program after year two or continue to participate for years three and four. Those who complete years three and four will receive an additional milestone notation on their official transcript.

The minimum grade point average requirements needed to maintain eligibility for Satisfactory Academic Progress are dictated by the specific program of study. In each case, per the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 668.34(a)(4)(ii), the federal student aid program requires a minimum of a C average to maintain eligibility for aid, but an individual degree or certificate program may have a higher minimum GPA for federal Satisfactory Academic Progress. Beyond Boundaries Program students are required to maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA. To be in good academic standing in the program on a semesterly basis, students are expected to complete a minimum of 12 units per semester with a minimum 2.0 semester GPA.

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Curriculum

Phase 1: Foundation (Years 1 and 2)

Year 1 (6 required credits)

Year 1 requirements include an introductory curricular sequence that teaches writing, the framework of interdisciplinary study, and collaborative problem solving, as well as one Beyond Boundaries course:

- Beyond Boundaries Seminar (3 credits total, 1 credit in fall and 2 credits in spring)
- Beyond Boundaries Courses (3 credits, 1 course in fall or spring)

College Writing (a supporting course): Analytical, communication, and research skills are critical to interdisciplinary practice. Through College Writing, students will have the opportunity to practice these skills in skills through a variety texts, contexts, and approaches they can carry with them in the Beyond Boundaries Program.

Fall Semester

- Beyond Boundaries Seminar (1 credit, Beyond Boundaries Program students only)
- One Beyond Boundaries Course (3 credits, either fall or spring)

Spring Semester

- Beyond Boundaries Seminar (2 credits, Beyond Boundaries Program students only)
- One Beyond Boundaries Course (3 credits, either fall or spring)

Year 2: Beyond Boundaries Programming and Self-Directed Interdisciplinary Learning

In Year 2 of the program, students will shift to self-directed learning. Components of this year include the following:

- Participation in Beyond Boundaries peer mentoring
- Beyond Boundaries workshops and events
- Engagement in on-/off-campus activities, such as these:
 - Speakers or exhibits
 - Networking events or workshops
 - Community service/volunteering events
 - Seminars or conferences
 - Internships/fellowships
 - Interdisciplinary courses/projects/programs

These various opportunities are designed to allow students the flexibility to achieve their academic and cocurricular goals beyond the Beyond Boundaries Program, while keeping them connected to the program community.

Students who complete Years 1 and 2 of the Beyond Boundaries Program receive a milestone notation on their transcript. Students may opt to continue this program into their third and fourth years.

For more information, please review the Beyond Boundaries Program's detailed description of self-directed learning [PDF].

Note: Students need to complete all of the requirements for Phase 1 of the Beyond Boundaries Program in order to continue on to Phase 2.

Phase 2: Focus (Years 3 and 4)

Years 3 and 4: Beyond Boundaries Programming, Self-Directed Learning, and Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone

Students who complete Phase 1 of Beyond Boundaries can choose to enroll in Phase 2.

There are three paths Beyond Boundaries Program students can follow to complete the requirements for Phase 2:

1. Students participate in Beyond Boundaries-specific programming and fulfill the self-directed learning (detailed above).
2. Students participate in Beyond Boundaries-specific programming and complete an individually determined capstone/thesis project.
3. Students participate in the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone and satisfy all of the set requirements. This requires application and selection.

Students who meet the program requirements of this second phase of the program will receive an additional program completion notation on their official transcript.

Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone (optional; application and selection required)

Beyond Boundaries Program students who apply and are selected to be team leads for the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone will receive seed funding for their team-based interdisciplinary capstone projects. This capstone will demonstrate the student's ability to frame a societal issue, gather an interdisciplinary team, and facilitate a collaborative process that culminates in a prototype. The capstone comes at a critical junction in a student's education and is a space to imagine their leadership and impact beyond college.

The capstone will be an active and engaged learning experience in which students will do the following:

- Frame their position on interdisciplinarity
- Develop a proposal for an interdisciplinary team-based project
- Assemble a team
- Implement a project
- Share their findings

Interdisciplinary collaboration is complex. To support the capstone experience, Beyond Boundaries faculty will provide project coaching and course-based learning. Students will engage in seminar-style discussions and skill-building workshops to support their progress. In addition, the Beyond Boundaries team will implement a capstone workbook that includes prompts and deliverables for each phase of the project as well as insights from interdisciplinary teams at WashU.

As part of this capstone experience, Beyond Boundaries Program students will take a three-semester course sequence (45 weeks, three 1-credit courses) beginning in the junior year and accommodating any study abroad or semester-long experiences during this time.

During these three semesters, students are required to assemble teams of three to five disciplinary thinkers. Team leads will spend the first five to seven weeks of the program articulating their interdisciplinary question and identifying team members. They will then assemble their team and move through the remainder of the curriculum together.

Non-Beyond Boundaries Program students who join the teams will be required to take Introduction to Interdisciplinary Practice, an intensive course to ensure that all team members have basic knowledge of this type of collaboration. More information about these Capstone and introductory courses can be found on the Courses tab (p. 3) of this page.

Courses

Courses for Beyond Boundaries Students

Year 1 Core Courses

To find Beyond Boundaries courses in Workday, search "Beyond Boundaries" in the subject line on the left.

Beyond Boundaries courses are offered for credit only to all students. They are not offered Pass/No Pass.

Beyond Boundaries Seminar (3 credits total)

The knowledge gained in the Beyond Boundaries Seminar series is designed to contribute to academic success, personal development, and a more rewarding social and academic experience throughout the college experience. The series consists of both a fall and spring course during the first year. The fall class is a 1-credit (1-hour) lecture, and the spring class combines a 1-credit (1-hour) lecture and a 1-credit (1-hour) discussion section.

BEYOND 1000 and BEYOND 1001: Beyond Boundaries Seminar

The Beyond Boundaries Seminar is designed to support students' development in interdisciplinary thinking and collaborative problem solving. Over the course of two semesters, students will engage in discussions, workshops, skill-building exercises, and panel presentations to grow their skills and knowledge in these areas. Over the course of the academic year, we will ask the following questions:

1. What role(s) do I want to play on collaborative problem-solving teams?
2. What skills and knowledge are necessary for interdisciplinary work?
3. How can I use my time at Washington University to grow these skills?

This course (for credit only) is required for all first-year students in the Beyond Boundaries Program and open only to first-year students in the Beyond Boundaries Program.

Beyond Boundaries Courses (3 credits each, open to all first-year students)

In addition to the course mentioned above, first-year students in the Beyond Boundaries Program will be required to complete one Beyond Boundaries course (during their first year), for which they will have priority enrollment.

Beyond Boundaries courses, which are funded by the Office of the Provost and offered to first-year students *only*, are designed to prepare students for a rapidly evolving world characterized by social, political, scientific, and economic challenges that cannot be solved using knowledge from a single discipline. Team-taught by faculty from different schools across Washington University, Beyond Boundaries courses offer a window into how scholars from different disciplines approach big, critical topics such as our aging population, the nature of creativity, the phenomenon of climate change, and the art of medicine.

Not all courses are offered every year.

BEYOND 1002 Beyond Boundaries: The Business of Elections

This course will focus on understanding the primary and presidential elections -- particularly the current election cycle-- through a multidisciplinary approach that primarily involves political science and business. Campaigns are start-ups that rely on strategy, branding, influencing consumers (voters), financing and other concepts to achieve the election of their candidate. At the same time, American politics is highly polarized, with voters who are increasingly hostile to listening to the other side. Given this context, how does a campaign succeed as an entrepreneurial venture? This course will allow students to compare and contrast how different candidates' policies and platforms may affect different constituencies/sectors of the business/labor world as well as the economy, how the media portrays them, and what role they will play in the general election. This course is for first-year (non-transfer) students only. Students who are not first-year students will be automatically unenrolled from this course.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: SSC BU: BA EN: S

Typical periods offered: Fall

BEYOND 1003 Beyond Boundaries: When I'm 64: Preparing Ourselves and Society for a Good Long Life

Whether you know it or not, you're living in the midst of a revolution - a revolution that is going to change your personal and professional lives. Although old age may seem a long way off, you'll likely live to age 80 or beyond, with a 50% chance of seeing your 100th birthday. The demographic revolution you're going to live through will change the health care you receive, the house you live in, the car you drive, the jobs you do, and the relationships you have. This class will give you a competitive edge in understanding how you can harness what's happening to shape your career and lifestyle. In class you'll be introduced to leaders and ideas from many fields - medicine, engineering, architecture, public health, social work, law, business, art, and psychology - focused on the issues of our aging society. There will also be opportunities to tailor the class to your interests through events on and off campus, including movies, lectures, performances, field trips, and community projects. Each week, we'll gather for lectures and also break into small groups for discussion. This course will set you on a path to lead the aging revolution and transform the society of tomorrow. This course is for credit only and offered first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: SSC BU: BA EN: S

Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1004 Beyond Boundaries: Beyond Sustainability: Planet, People, Prosperity

Building a sustainable future requires informed critical thinkers who can collaborate across disciplines to redesign cities, transportation, agriculture, conservation, decarbonized energy grids, manufacturing, and more. This team-taught course integrates principles from

engineering, policy, design, economics, and natural and social science necessary to build a more sustainable world. Through simulations, guest speakers, group workshops, and discussions, students develop the analytical and problem-solving skills needed to evaluate and critique solutions for “planet, people, and prosperity”. This course empowers students with the interdisciplinary knowledge and communication tools needed to become sustainability leaders in their communities and careers. This course is for credit only and offered to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: SSC EN: S
Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1005 Beyond Boundaries: The Endgame of Entrepreneurship: Leveraging Capitalism for Good

Historically, profit has been a key driver of human behavior. In this course, students will learn to take advantage of the profit-seeking motive of capitalism while also learning from the mistakes and unintended consequences capitalism has caused throughout history. Students will apply these learnings toward profit-seeking solutions for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which are global challenges that call us to work together with boldness and urgency. We will explore how skills from entrepreneurship and venture creation can be used to improve water, climate, education and gender equality globally and here in St. Louis. In interdisciplinary teams, students will learn how to define a problem; listen to customers, competitors and collaborators; create value; measure impact; and communicate their vision. Bold entrepreneurial spirit and skills learned in this course will guide students in their further studies at Washington University and beyond. This course does not count for Economics major/minor elective credit. This course is for credit only and offered to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: SSC BU: BA, ETH EN: S
Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1007 Beyond Boundaries: Designing Creativity: Innovation Across Disciplines

From a-ha! epiphanies to slow-developing discoveries, the creative process has been employed by innovators and artists in virtually every corner of the globe for centuries. This course will explore the study and practice of the creative process across many disciplines, with input from prominent thinkers and practitioners in the areas of medicine, neuroscience, law, engineering, architecture, human-centered design, business, stage design, and the performing arts. The course will also incorporate the practice of design thinking and creativity techniques via a lab component that will allow students to explore the development of innovative ideas in collaborative teams followed by project presentations to core faculty and classmates. This course is for credit only and offered to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: HUM Art: FADM BU: HUM EN: H
Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1008 Beyond Boundaries: Religious Freedom in America

The intersection of religion and law in American society has sparked some of the fiercest cultural engagements in recent memory: Should a for-profit religious corporation have a right not to fund birth control for its employees? Can a public college expel campus religious groups whose membership is not open to all students? May a Muslim in prison grow a beard for religious reasons? Should a cake baker or a florist be permitted to refuse services for a gay wedding? Can a church hire and fire its ministers for any reason? These current debates and the issues that frame them are interwoven in the American story. This course introduces students to the major texts and historical arguments

underlying that story. Drawing from the respective expertise of the instructors, the course will expose students to a variety of scholarly methods related to the issue: legal history and case law, intellectual history and canonical texts, social history and narrative accounts, and political philosophy and contemporary analyses. This course is for credit only and offered to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC BU: ETH, HUM EN: H

Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1009 Beyond Boundaries: The Art of Medicine

This interdisciplinary, cross-school course at the intersection of history, visual culture and the visual arts includes a roster of notable speakers and offers students a singular encounter with western medicine from ancient times to the present day. In tandem with the history of medicine, the course examines the capacity of the arts to frame medical practice and to raise questions and influence perceptions, both positively and negatively, of medical advancements. This course is for credit only and offered to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1013 Beyond Boundaries: Morality and Markets

What does it look like to live a moral life in today's market system? We know all too well what it does not look like. The news is filled with moral failures of leaders and executives at top firms. We like to believe that we would behave differently, but what kinds of pressures inform our moral choices? What pulls us, what pushes us, and what persuades us to act one way rather than another? These are the questions that a course combining business and literature can address in unique ways; the world of fiction helps us to examine the ethical dilemmas of the market we inhabit every day. In this course, we use great books, classics of film and modern television, and the tools of modern psychology and business strategy to think critically about what is entailed in living a moral life in the midst of the modern market. This course is for credit only and offered to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

BEYOND 1015 Beyond Boundaries: Earth's Future: Causes and Consequences of Global Climate Change

Climate change is said by many to be one of the most important issues of our time. This course examines 1) the physical basis for climate change; 2) how climates are changing and how we know and assess that climates are changing; and 3) the effects of climate change on natural and human systems. The course is team-taught and will involve participation by scholars across the university with expertise in specific subjects. Earth's Future is a broad, introductory course for first year students. While this course presumes no special subject matter knowledge on the part of the student you will be exposed to a broad array of scholarship across the sciences, social sciences, engineering, and humanities. This course is only offered for credit to first-year (non-transfer) students only.

Credit 3 units. A&S: FYBB A&S IQ: NSM BU: SCI

Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

Supporting Courses

College Writing (3 credits, first year)

Analytical, communication, and research skills are critical to interdisciplinary practice. Through WashU's College Writing Program, students will have the opportunity to practice these skills through a variety of texts, contexts, and approaches that they can carry with them in the Beyond Boundaries Program.

Supporting Courses for Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone Option for Phase 2

The following courses are only required for students who apply to and are selected for the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone (Path 3). These courses will be offered beginning in Spring 2027.

Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone Courses (3 credits)

The Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone Courses, a requirement of the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone, are a sequence of three 1-credit classes taken during the junior and senior years. Over the course of these three semesters, participating students will demonstrate their ability to frame a societal issue, gather an interdisciplinary team, and facilitate a collaborative process that culminates in a prototype. Team leads will spend the first five to seven weeks of the program articulating their interdisciplinary question and identifying team members. They will then assemble their team and move through the remainder of the curriculum together. Prerequisites for these courses include the student being selected for the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone.

Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone Course (first semester)

The first Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone course can be taken in either the fall or spring semester of a student's junior year and focuses on team development and identifying the direction of the project. Prerequisite: Student must be selected for the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone. (1 credit)

Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone Course (second semester)

The second Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone course will be taken during the fall semester of a student's senior year and focuses on project implementation, information/data gathering, and advancing ideas into concepts. Prerequisite: Student must be selected for the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone. (1 credit)

Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone Course (third semester)

The third Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone course will be taken during the spring semester of a student's senior year and focuses on refining a prototype into a final deliverable, incorporating feedback, and presenting the work. Prerequisite: Student must be selected for the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone. (1 credit)

Upper-Level Beyond Boundaries Courses

Introduction to Interdisciplinary Practice

This course is designed to support students' development in the areas of interdisciplinary thinking and collaborative problem solving. Students will engage in discussions, skill-building exercises, and a series of workshops on interdisciplinary skills. Panels of practitioners and facilitated sessions will examine how to integrate skills into interdisciplinary practices. This course is required for non-Beyond Boundaries Program students who join the Beyond Boundaries Fellows Capstone as collaborators. This course is also open to any non-first-year students who are wanting to gain interdisciplinary collaborative skills and/or who are joining Phase 2 of the Beyond Boundaries Program. (2 credits)
