

Individualized Major Program (IMP)

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### **Committee for the Individualized Major**

**Professors** Thomas Davis, *Religious Studies*; Monroe Little, *History/Afro-American Studies*; Obioma Nnaemeka, *World Languages and Cultures, French/Women's Studies*; William Schneider, *History/Medical Humanities*; Richard E. Ward, *Anthropology*

**Associate Professors** Enrica Ardemagni, *World Languages and Cultures, Spanish*; Dennis Bingham, *English/Film Studies*; Timothy S. Brothers, *Geography*; Margaret Ferguson, *Political Science*; Ch. Didier Gondola, *History*; Richard Gunderman, *Philosophy*; Kristine Karnick, *Communication Studies*; Karen Kovacik, *English*; Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, *Anthropology/Museum Studies*; Paul Mullins, *Anthropology*; Nancy Robertson, *History/Women's Studies/American Studies*; Susan Shepherd, *English/Linguistics*; Reiko Yonogi, *World Languages and Cultures, Japanese*.

**Faculty** All members of the IUPUI faculty are eligible to teach courses and serve as Faculty Advisors for an Individualized Major.

**Academic Advising** Cavanaugh Hall 401, (317) 274-3976

**Web site:** <http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/imp/>

### **Individualized Major Program**

While the needs of most students are well served by existing majors offered on campus, some students have academic interests that do not fit well into existing programs or traditional disciplinary boundaries. The Individualized Major Program (IMP) in the School of Liberal Arts meets the needs of such students. It

serves disciplined and self-motivated students who may wish to major in traditional disciplines or interdisciplinary areas for which majors are not available at IUPUI, as well as those who wish to fashion unique and original interdisciplinary majors that reflect their individual experience, interests, and needs. These include students whose work and life experiences suggest the need for fresh ways of organizing existing courses into meaningful new majors, as well as innovative students who wish to bring together course work in several disciplines to focus on a thematic area or make unusual yet valid connections between areas that are rarely studied together. The IMP can also serve transfer students who wish to continue work started elsewhere in areas in which IUPUI has faculty expertise but no organized majors.

Unlike other majors, which prescribe a fixed area of study, the individualized major provides a structure that allows such students, in consultation with faculty members, to design their own majors on various topics and fields of study. Each major course of study varies in accordance with the needs and interests of individual students. Students work closely with faculty advisors, and all individualized majors are overseen and approved by a faculty committee that ensures each student-designed major has intellectual integrity and rigor.

### **Admission and Academic Progress**

The Individualized Major Program is administered through the School of Liberal Arts Office of Student Affairs, which supplies information and initial counseling to students who wish to consider designing an individualized major. All students seeking admission to the IMP must be admitted to the School of Liberal Arts and normally have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. All liberal arts students, except those

on academic probation, are eligible to apply for an Individualized Major Program. Before making formal application for admission to the Individualized Major Program, students must have completed at least 30 hours of general education requirements including English W132, Communication R110, and Mathematics M118 (or its equivalent).

Students desiring to pursue an individualized major should confer with the director of the program who will provide assistance in identifying and securing the agreement of a faculty member to serve as advisor. Under the supervision of this advisor the student will take I360, a 1-credit hour tutorial course in which he or she prepares a proposal for an individualized major. A student is admitted into the Individualized Major

Program when his or her proposal is approved by a small committee appointed by the director. These committees are individualized for each student; they include the advisor, members of the faculty Committee for the Individualized Major, and other faculty members with appropriate expertise who may be recommended by the student and advisor. The major plan may subsequently be amended only in consultation with the advisor and with approval of the student's committee.

After gaining admission to the program, students must meet each semester with their advisors to register for courses and consider academic progress. A key component of the senior year is the variable credit capstone course I460, an independent study project in which students synthesize their work in the major. The project is approved and graded by the IMP Committee or a panel of experts appointed by the committee. The advisor and the IMP director certify students for graduation with the individualized major.

## **Requirements**

The individualized major requires a minimum of 34 credit hours:

1) Two courses are required of all students (4-7 cr.):

- I360 Individualized Major Plan (1 credit hour), a tutorial in which a student develops his or her plan for a major, including a list of courses, schedule, and rationale. This proposal must be more than a simple list of courses. Students proposing majors in traditional fields should discuss the history and nature of the discipline, describe its subfields and the methodologies it employs, and show how the proposed major fits within this framework. Those designing unique majors need to establish the intellectual unity of the proposed major and show appreciation of the different disciplinary traditions and methodologies on which it will draw. Upon approval of this plan by an advisor and the faculty Individualized Major Program Committee, the student is accepted into the Individualized Major Program.
- I460 Individualized Major Senior Project, a variable credit tutorial (3-6 cr.) preferably taken over two semesters as a 6-credit hour course devoted to a capstone project that culminates and integrates the individualized major. Normally this is a major research paper with an oral presentation. Other options, such as a performance, multimedia product, work of literature, film, or work of art, may be approved if appropriate for a particular plan of study. Normally the project is defended through a seminar or colloquium. Ideally the grade for this course is recommended by the advisor and approved by the faculty Committee for the Individualized Major. In practice, the committee grants authority to the director to appoint individual faculty committees to assist advisors in assigning grades.

2) The remaining courses are selected from existing courses.

- No lower- or upper-division courses applied to general education requirements may be included in the individualized major.

- At least 15 credit hours in the major must be at the 300 or 400 level (in addition to I360 and I460).
- No more than 6 credit hours of independent study may be counted in the major.
- All courses counted in the major must be taken for letter grade; no course receiving a grade below C may be counted toward the major.

**Undergraduate Courses** (required for all individualized majors)

**SLA I360 Individualized Major Plan (1 cr.).** P: approval by advisor. A tutorial in which a student develops a plan for an individualized major. Upon approval of this plan, the student is admitted to the Individualized Major Program.

**SLA I460 Individualized Major Senior Project (3-6 cr.).** P: I360 (i.e. admission to the Individualized Major Program) and approval by advisor. A variable-credit tutorial devoted to a capstone project that culminates and integrates the individualized major. Preferably taken in the senior year as a two-semester, 6-credit course.