

Interdisciplinary Social Science, BLA

The rationale for the College core requirement in social science acknowledges the significant diversity within the disciplines and departments grouped under that umbrella: some approaches are “quantitative or experimental,” while others are “observational and interpretive.” What unites them, the rationale suggests, is that “all examine the ways people think and act as members of social networks, how those networks function as complex systems, and how those systems in turn affect individual lives.” The major in Interdisciplinary Social Science begins with the assumption that incarcerated students are particularly attuned to the workings of so many of these complex systems, and their often malign effects on both individuals and communities. It seeks to build on the passionate drive that incarcerated students have to understand these “structures and institutions we take for granted” by giving them the theoretical frameworks and methodological apparatuses necessary to analyze and critique those structures and systems. The major brings together course offerings from Anthropology, Economics, Government, Linguistics, Psychology, and Sociology, as well as from College interdisciplinary programs with strengths in the social sciences (e.g., the History, Behavioral Science, and Social Inquiry concentration in African American Studies, as well as subfields within Justice and Peace Studies and Women’s and Gender Studies).

In order to provide a coherent framework for the diversity of approaches within the social sciences, the major is integrative at key places in the curriculum: both the two-course introductory sequence (which functions as the core requirement for all students and the gateway to the major program) and the two-course methodologies sequence* are interdisciplinary in nature, surveying motivating questions and methodologies from across College departments and programs. The intermediate electives will give students opportunities to gain depth or breadth in social science disciplines of particular interest, while there will be further opportunities for interdisciplinary and integrative work in the advanced seminars and the capstone course. At the highest level, the major invites students not only to understand and analyze existing social structures but also to imagine possibilities for social transformation—more inclusive communities, more participatory democracy, a more just social order.

*NB: all students in the BLA program satisfy the core Mathematics/Computer Science requirement with Probability and Statistics (MATH 040), which serve as preparation and the prerequisite for the quantitative methods introduced in the major.

Requirements

The major in Interdisciplinary Social Science requires ten (10) courses as follows:

Intro to Interdisciplinary Social Science (2)

Two-course sequence, serving as the core requirement in social science for all students in the BLA program as well as the gateway into the major for those who so choose. Course will have a thematic focus (e.g., gentrification; inequality; migration and refugees), with topic

to vary by professor. May be team-taught or taught on a colloquium model, with one instructor of record and modules from each discipline or interdiscipline taught on a rotating basis.

Methodologies in the Social Sciences (2)

Introduces quantitative and qualitative research methods, inclusive of all methodologies employed across the social sciences in College programs, in a problem- or project-based approach. Ordinarily completed in the third or fourth year of the program.

Intermediate Social Science Electives (3)

These courses can be interdisciplinary in nature, but will more often resemble common intermediate electives taught within major programs on the main campus: 2000+ courses in African American Studies; 2000+ electives in Anthropology; 2000- and 3000-level electives in Government; 3000+ courses in Justice and Peace Studies; 3000- and 4000-level courses in Linguistics; 2000- and 3000-level courses in Psychology; 2000+ electives in Sociology; 3000+ courses in WGST.

NB: Intermediate electives can be taken either before or after the methodologies sequence.

Advanced Seminars in the Social Sciences (2)

This tier of courses is for advanced work in the major, with opportunities to work in greater depth on areas of interest to faculty and students. Advanced seminars can be interdisciplinary in focus or similar to upper-level courses taught within disciplinary major programs on the main campus. Potential for courses to be offered in response to student (research) interests.

Senior Capstone (1)

Emphasis on mentored research, sharing of work in progress, and integration and reflection.

The BLA Core curriculum is designed to mirror as closely as possible the core curriculum of the main campus undergraduate programs in the College (<http://coursecatalog.georgetown.edu/academics/undergraduate-regulations/georgetown-core-curriculum-requirements/>). As such, the BLA core requirements match those of the University and College Core curricula, with only minor modifications (e.g., an expanded BLA writing curriculum and a slightly modified foreign language requirement).

The BLA Core curriculum consists of 18 required courses, as follows:

- Three courses (12 credits) in Writing, plus integrated writing requirement in the major*
 - WRIT 1143: Life Writing
 - WRIT 1150: Writing and Culture Seminar
- One additional course in Writing, with emphases on problem- or project-based strategies, persuasive or professional writing, etc.
- Two courses in Philosophy
 - PHIL 1902: Philosophy and Intellectual History
 - One PHIL elective 2000+
- Two courses in Theology and Religious Studies
 - THEO 1000: Problem of God
 - One intermediate THEO elective, 2000-3999

- Two courses in History
 - HIST 1099: History Focus
 - One survey course from the following list: Intro to Early (1401), Intro to Late (1402), Indian Ocean World (1104), Atlantic World (1106), Pacific World (1107), Africa I (1200), Africa II (1201), South Asia I (1307), Modern South Asia II (1308), Americas I (1501), Latin America I (1503), Latin America II (1504), Middle East I (1601), or Middle East II (1602)
- One course in Mathematics/Computer Science
 - MATH 1040: Probability and Statistics
- One course to satisfy the Science For All (SFA) requirement
- One course in HALM (Humanities: Arts, Literature, Music, & Media)
- Two courses in Social Science
 - IDSS 2010 and 2020, Introduction to Interdisciplinary Social Science I and II
- Three courses/12 credits of foreign language**
- UNXD 1200 Race, Power and Justice at GU (2 credits), plus two additional “overlay” courses to fulfill the University-wide Pathways to Social Justice requirement***

NB: Consistent with College regulations, a course can fulfill both a core and a major requirement, but no course may fulfill two separate core requirements, with the exception of the Pathways to Social Justice “overlay” requirement explained above.

*As in main campus undergraduate programs in the College, the integrated writing requirement is “an intensive writing experience located within the student’s chosen major” designed to “prepare students to use the relevant forms, styles, and conventions of their chosen area(s) of study.” While writing will be integrated throughout all three of the major programs in the BLA degree, the capstone course in each of the major programs will be designated as the course that fulfills the integrated writing requirement.

**Unlike in main campus College undergraduate programs, where the foreign language requirement is a proficiency requirement, and it is possible to place out of the requirement via examination, all students in the BLA program are required to complete 12 credits of foreign language coursework. Languages will be offered in an intensive summer session, and the language(s) offered will vary.