

# Student/Faculty Designed Major

Global Humanities and Religions Department • College of Humanities and Social Sciences

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## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The procedures for creating a Student/Faculty Designed Major (SFDM) are intended to assure that the student receives appropriate advice and to assure the university that the major is comparable to established majors in coherence, rigor, and depth. ***The student proposing the major has ultimate responsibility for complying with the following policies and procedures, including completing the SFDM Contract.*** Failure to follow the procedures may delay or prevent approval of the major by the college curriculum council.

The Student/Faculty-Designed Major (SFDM) is a program/major that leads to either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree granted by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The SFDM allows students, in consultation with appropriate faculty, to design individualized programs in subject-areas or with educational objectives that are not served by existing departmental majors. Programs may have either an academic or pre-professional focus.

The Global Humanities and Religions Department is responsible for administering this program. The Chair of this department provides guidance, information and general advisement for interested students. Particular academic and professional advisement, pertaining to the curricular content of each major, is largely the responsibility of the participating Advisory Committee faculty.

The primary purpose of the SFDM is to enable motivated students to make creative use of Western's curricular resources in academically sound ways. The expectations regarding academic substance and standards are not less than those of "regular" majors. Responsibility for compliance with the policies, procedures, and intent of the SFDM is shared by the student and an Advisory Committee consisting of three to four faculty.

## POLICIES

### STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. A student's program contract should be in progress no later than Fall quarter of the junior year.
2. The student is not freed from the responsibility of meeting prerequisites for the proposed courses of the major.
3. The student must meet all requirements for the bachelor's degree of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences as outlined in the current University catalog.
4. The student proposing the program/major and the Chair of the Advisory Committee will be required to attend the CHSS Curriculum Council meeting at which their program/major is discussed.

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

1. The program must include at least 70 credit hours, but no more than 110 credit hours. At least 45 credit hours must be taken from departments within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.
2. At least half of the total number of credits in the major should come from upper-division coursework.
3. No more than 50% of the credits in the program may be credits completed before the contract date. The contract date is the date in which the student reviews the initial draft of the Description of Major and Plan of Study with the Global Humanities and Religions Chair.
4. The program cannot substantially duplicate existing major programs, or be designed simply to circumvent already established major requirements. Like all programs/majors, SFDMs should exhibit breadth, focus and depth.
5. Each program/major must be approved by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum Council (CHSS CC).
6. If the program/major is to be used for teacher certification, it must also be developed in accordance with the policies and procedures for interdisciplinary majors set by the Teacher Curricula & Certification Council and approved by that Council.

#### CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS (Plan of Study):

1. The curriculum for each program is developed with the assistance of the Advisory Committee, with one individual designated as Chair of the committee and principal advisor.
2. Considerable initial thought should be given to the courses included in the program/major.
3. Courses may be drawn from any academic unit of the university to which the student has access.
4. The program of courses presented in a SFDM Description of Major and Plan of Study should be logically coherent and academically defensible in relation to its stated educational objectives. The Plan of Study should not be a diffuse collection of courses, selected without focus, or in order to graduate quickly, or to avoid pertinent substantive courses because of inherent difficulty or personal distaste.
5. Students who wish to include study abroad courses in their curriculum should propose and have their programs approved **BEFORE** the study abroad. This is especially important if completion of the study abroad program will result in more than 50% of the total credits having been taken.
6. At least 50% of the total credits in a SFDM Plan of Study should be from upper-division courses.
7. Allow for completion of course prerequisites within the program if not already completed.
8. Make sure no course duplicates a course previously taken.
9. Independent Study courses may be included in the Plan of Study, but credits earned from Independent Study courses may not exceed 30% of the total number of credits. Students are required to submit syllabi or course outlines for each proposed Independent Study course along with the draft contract. Course outlines should contain the following details:
  - Prerequisites and rationale for the prerequisites, if any
  - Course objectives
  - Course outline
  - Assignments or requirements
  - Readings
  - Evaluations
  - Contact hours
10. Provide for alternative courses, if appropriate. Student can use the "One course from the following" method to indicate course alternatives.
11. A plan for meeting the University's Writing Proficiency requirement must be submitted as part of the course of study, section D of the contract, although the course(s) by which that requirement is met do not have to be included among the courses constituting the major.

#### ACCESS TO CURRICULUM, SUBSTITUTIONS or CHANGES:

1. Qualification and course access are determined by the academic unit, and the contract must be approved by the Chair, Program Director, or designated representative of each department from which two or more courses are drawn.
2. Approval of a SFDM Contract does not necessarily guarantee registration access as many departments use enrollment restrictions. Students should consult academic departments prior to the beginning of registration.
3. University regulations regarding directed independent-study courses and supervised field internships apply to the Student/Faculty-Designed Major.
4. There are no specifications regarding the number of academic units represented.
5. Any change of program/major after CHSS Curriculum Council approval will be considered only for scheduling problems, course content changes, or removal of courses from the catalog. Student should contact the Advisory Committee Chair for guidance and approval.
  - Changes of THREE (3) or FEWER courses must have the approval via email or in writing (memo) of the Advisory Committee Chair.
  - Changes of FOUR (4) or MORE courses must have the approval via email or in writing (memo) of the student's Advisory Committee (all members)
  - Dated and signed memos or emails approving changes are to be submitted to the Global Humanities and Religions Department office (BH 152), or via email (GHR@wwu.edu).
6. Changes will NOT BE PERMITTED if they result from failing grades.

## PROCEDURES

1. Students interested in a Student/Faculty Designed Major should contact the Global Humanities and Religions department at [GHR@wwu.edu](mailto:GHR@wwu.edu) to schedule an initial advising appointment with the Department Chair after having thoroughly reviewed the Policies and Procedures contained in this document.
2. Prepare a draft Description of Major and Plan of Study, and a 1-2 page typed rationale (see below, #3) to bring with you to the initial advising appointment; complete the following sections and be prepared to modify after the advising meeting.
  - Title of Major/Program (6 words or less)
  - Description of Major/Program (major)
  - Draft Plan of Study (remember CHSS requires that less than 50% of the course work has been completed)
3. Develop and write a 1-2 page typed rationale for the proposed major. A key component within the rationale is an explanation of your specific educational goals and how the program best serves those goals. The rationale should define the subject of the major, and indicate how the various curricular components of the program work together to meet your educational goals. Additionally, it should indicate as precisely as possible the content of any directed Independent Study courses or supervised internships. In general the rationale should serve as a brief explanation of the major, written as clearly and concisely as possible using formal language.
4. INITIAL ADVISING MEETING
  - Review draft components (listed above) and discuss possible members of the Advisory Committee.
  - It may be necessary to modify the course work in your proposed course of study to achieve necessary breadth and depth.
  - After the meeting, make any necessary changes to the Description of Major and Plan of Study and rationale so that both are in final form (although further revisions may be needed) and ready to be reviewed by the Advisory Committee.
5. SELECTING THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
  - The Advisory Committee will consist of a minimum of three faculty.
  - The Advisory Committee Chair will be from the department with the largest number of courses in the program.
  - Each academic department providing more than one course in the program must be represented on the Advisory Committee, and the Chair for that department must also indicate her/his/their approval of your Plan of Study.
  - Student will contact the faculty and ask them to participate on the committee. It is also good to ask faculty for convenient days and times for future meetings.
6. SCHEDULE THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (approximately 1 hour)
  - It is the student's responsibility to identify a mutually acceptable date, time, and location (an in-person meeting is preferred; an online meeting is also permissible) for a meeting between the student and all members of the Advisory Committee. This meeting is intended as a forum for the faculty and student to discuss together the educational goals of the student and potential options or refinements to the proposed curriculum.
  - Student will contact all members of their Advisory Committee one week in advance to confirm the meeting date, time and location.
  - PRIOR to the Advisory Committee meeting, the student will send the typed DRAFT DESCRIPTION of MAJOR and PLAN of STUDY, RATIONALE, and an unofficial transcript (available in Web4U) to each member of the committee, and a meeting reminder to be sure that all faculty will be in attendance.
7. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
  - Student will ensure that the meeting date is recorded in Section B of their contract. An in-person meeting is preferred; an online meeting is also permissible. Email communication is NOT considered a meeting.

- The student and Advisory Committee are responsible for checking course prerequisites, evaluating the program plan of study, and the language and content of the major title, description and rationale.
8. AFTER THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
- Student notifies Global Humanities and Religions department that Advisory Committee has meet and what day.
  - Student will submit committee approved Description of Major and Plan of Study, rational and all supporting documentation at least three (3) weeks prior to the CHSS Curriculum Council meeting (visit the Global Humanities and Religions department website at <https://chss.wvu.edu/humanities-religions/studentfaculty-designed-majors> for upcoming meeting dates).
  - Global Humanities and Religions will initiate the SFDM Contract e-sign form and submit it to the student. The student will double check information and approve to Advisory Committee Chair. If the student has a question concerning information on the form, contact [GHR@wvu.edu](mailto:GHR@wvu.edu).
9. CHSS CURRICULUM COUNCIL
- CHSS Curriculum Council (CHSS CC) reviews Student/Faculty Designed Major Contracts primarily during Fall quarter. Dates of CHSS CC meetings are listed on the Global Humanities and Religions website: <https://chss.wvu.edu/humanities-religions/studentfaculty-designed-majors>
  - CHSS will email the student and the Advisory Committee Chair with meeting date and location; student must confirm her/his/their availability.
  - The day of meeting the CHSS CC members will ask the student to provide an overview of the program, explain the rationale for the proposed curriculum, and describe how the Student/Faculty Designed Major relates to future plans.
    - The CHSS CC may raise substantive questions and propose modifications. For this reason, it is important that the Advisory Committee Chair accompany the student to the CHSS CC meeting to help explain the course of study.
    - For the same reason students should present the proposed program/major to CHSS CC as early as possible.
    - The CHSS CC is particularly sensitive about timely presentation, and may recommend a General Studies Major in cases where more than 50% of the major courses have already been completed.
10. CHSS CC APPROVED CONTRACT
- After the contract is approved by the CHSS CC, the CHSS CC Chair and returned to the Global Humanities and Religions Department.
  - The faculty on the contract will be notified of the contract approval, and given electronic copies of documents as required.
11. ACCESS TO CURRICULUM, SUBSTITUTIONS or CHANGES
- Approval of the contract does not necessarily provide registration access as many departments have enrollment restrictions in place. Check with all academic departments prior to registration to discuss access to courses.
  - Any changes to the Plan of Study require some kind of written or email approval (see “Access to Curriculum, Substitutions or Changes” in the Policies section of this document) prior to course enrollment. Student will secure prior written or emailed approval as required for any changes in the program.
  - Copies of any approved changes in the curriculum must be delivered or emailed ([GHR@wvu.edu](mailto:GHR@wvu.edu)) to the Global Humanities and Religions Department for the student’s record. GHR will attach all said documents to the contract.
12. SENIOR CREDIT EVALUATION
- At the time of senior credit evaluation for graduation, it is the student’s responsibility to update the Description of Major and Plan of Study. This will be used as your Major Evaluation form for graduation.
  - The updated Description of Major and Plan of Study must be reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Advisory Committee, and then submitted to the Global Humanities and Religions department for the

Chair's review. Allow 3-5 business days for this final approval. You will be notified by email when it is ready for you to pick up and take to the Registrar's office.

- The following items will need to be submitted to the Registrar's office when you apply for graduation.
  - Application for Graduation (available from the Registrar's office)
  - A PDF copy of the original, approved Student/Faculty Designed Major Contract
  - Updated Description of Major and Plan of Study with signatures of approval

Questions regarding policies, procedures, or other matters should be directed to the Global Humanities and Religions Department (Bond Hall 152, (360) 650-3031, [GHR@wwu.edu](mailto:GHR@wwu.edu)).

	APPROVAL NEEDED					
	Student	Chair, Global Humanities & Religions	Faculty Advisory Committee	Dept. Chair or Program Director	CHSS Curriculum Council	Date Step Completed
<b>REQUIRED STEPS</b>						
<b>Review Procedures</b> Contact GHR Global Humanities and Religions Manager to schedule appt. for initial advising (650-3031)	✓					
<b>Start draft contract &amp; meet w/Global Humanities and Religions Chair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Advisory Committee Chair</li> <li>Draft course of study (Only 50% of course work should have been completed, and at least 50% of the courses should be upper-division.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Meet w/Global humanities and Religions Chair and identify potential committee members</li> </ul>	→	✓				
<b>Contact &amp; confirm Advisory Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact potential committee members</li> <li>Confirm committee members &amp; email Global Humanities and Religions Department with names</li> </ul>	✓					
<b>Complete Draft Contract</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the following sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title of Major</li> <li>Committee members</li> <li>Description of major</li> <li>Course of Study (Only 50% of course work should be completed as of approval date of contract)</li> <li>Rationale</li> <li>Unofficial transcript</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓					
<b>Set Advisory Committee meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date of meeting: _____ (with all committee members in attendance)</li> <li>Prior to meeting, provide copies of draft contract to all committee members</li> </ul>	✓					
<b>Meet with Advisory Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, revise and approve contract</li> <li>Committee signatures after revisions completed</li> </ul>	→	→	✓			
<b>Complete Contract – Additional Signatures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval signatures required from either the Department Chair or Program Director as applicable (Page 2, Instruction #7)</li> </ul>	→	→	→	✓		
<b>Contract and Transcript to Global Humanities and Religions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be submitted 2 weeks prior to CHSS Curriculum Council meeting</li> </ul>	✓					
<b>CHSS Curriculum Council   presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date of meeting: _____</li> <li>Approval signature from CHSS CC chair</li> </ul>	→	→	→	→	✓ final	

