

Interdisciplinary Studies

Bachelor of Arts (BA)

ISF is an interdisciplinary major and a research-driven program of liberal education. It has been ranked the top personalized major offered at US universities and colleges. ISF offers students the unique opportunity to develop an individualized cross-disciplinary research program that includes a course of study and a senior thesis. The course of study is made up of courses taken in the social sciences, the humanities, and/or the professional schools and colleges, alongside the required courses in ISF. The capstone experience is a scholarly, rigorously-researched, 40-page required senior thesis, which represents a sustained inquiry in the social sciences or humanities based on original, cross-disciplinary research.

ISF has identified a number of interdisciplinary research fields that have engendered excellent scholarship and attracted students across campus. ISF students may pursue other research fields identified in consultation with ISF faculty and academic advisers. The already-defined ISF research fields provide models and resources about scholarly interests. The research fields found on the ISF website are there to help ISF students identify their own research interests and customize their own research program and course of liberal arts study.

Declaring the Major

Students may apply to the major at any point during the semester prior to the final day of classes after they have 1) completed the prerequisite courses and 2) had their research program approved by an ISF faculty advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with an ISF faculty adviser well in advance of submitting their application to discuss their research program and coursework. The online ISF Major Application (https://isf.ugis.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ISF-Major-Application_fillable.pdf) can be found on this page and on the ISF 'Applying' webpage (<https://isf.ugis.berkeley.edu/applying/>).

The application package should consist of a well-conceived research program, including a proposed course of study and an intellectual justification of their proposed study. Research programs must be interdisciplinary, integrating methodological or theoretical approaches from at least three academic disciplines (departments or programs). Interdisciplinary work may be comparative, historical, regional, thematic, or problem-focused. The research program should not replicate an existing major. The purpose of the ISF major is to allow undergraduates to combine work across disciplines in courses and with faculty where no other structured program exists. Finally, the research program must be feasible, and the senior thesis must answer a manageable research question in a semester's hard work (ISF 190). Each student's proposed research program is discussed with and approved by a faculty adviser to assure feasibility, but the final responsibility is the student's. Students may review Research Field criteria and sample Research Fields (<https://isf.ugis.berkeley.edu/research-fields/>) on the ISF website.

The nature of the major requires repeated elaboration of the proposed research program, course of study, and senior thesis that best combine students' individual research interests and the ISF program goals. Students are assigned an advisor upon acceptance into the major, although faculty members outside ISF may serve as advisers when appropriate, as approved by the ISF director.

Honors Program

All honors students enroll in the senior thesis seminar with other majors (ISF 190). Students seeking honors must identify and seek out senate faculty members from other departments, ideally members of the ISF Faculty Advisory Board, to serve as second readers. Students must then let their ISF 190 instructor know that they intend to pursue honors in the major, and will give the name of their second reader to the ISF 190 instructor. Their grades in ISF 190 will be constituted by an average of grades assigned by the ISF 190 Instructor and the second readers.

Students eligible for honors must have an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.6, including grades in ISF courses, at the beginning of the semester in which they enroll in ISF 190. Students in the honors option will be nominated for a degree of honors (honors, high honors, highest honors) by the ISF instructor, the second reader, or another ladder faculty member. The assessment of the degree of honors will be made by an ISF Honors Committee consisting of no fewer than two teaching faculty of the ISF Program and two academic senate members under the oversight of the ISF director. The ISF Honors Committee will use the criteria of scholarly originality, methodological sophistication (including interdisciplinarity), the quality of source interpretation, and excellence in writing and argumentation to adjudicate the degree of honors to be conferred.

Minor Program

There is no minor program in Interdisciplinary Studies.

In addition to the University, campus, and college requirements, listed on the College Requirements tab, students must fulfill the below requirements specific to their major program.

General Guidelines

1. **All courses taken to fulfill the major requirements below must be taken for a letter grade.**
2. No more than one upper division course may be used to simultaneously fulfill requirements for a student's major and minor programs, with the exception of minors offered outside of the College of Letters & Science and their policies.
3. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 must be maintained in both upper and lower division courses used to fulfill the major requirements.

For information regarding residence requirements and unit requirements, please see the College Requirements tab.

Summary of Major Requirements

Prerequisites- 2 courses

One "Disciplines" and one "World Regions" course, B- or higher in each

Upper Division Requirements- 10 courses

Course of Study: Minimum six courses, 20 units

Core Methodology: Two courses

Interdisciplinary Research Methods: One course

Senior Thesis: One course

The ISF prerequisite requirement consists of two courses, one of the Disciplines, and the other on World Regions. Both courses need to be taken for a B- or better. Courses fulfilling this prerequisite are listed below. A prospective major can apply to the major by filling

out an application after they have completed their first course (with a B- or better) and are currently enrolled in their second required course; their final acceptance into the program will be contingent on receiving a grade of B- or better in the second course.

Disciplines

Students must take one of the following introductory courses (or their recognized equivalent, if transfer students):

ANTHRO 3	Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology	4
ECON 1	Introduction to Economics	4
ECON 2	Introduction to Economics--Lecture Format	4
EDUC 190	Critical Studies in Education	4
GEOG 10	Course Not Available	4
PHILOS 2	Individual Morality and Social Justice	4
PHILOS 3	The Nature of Mind	4
POL SCI 2	Introduction to Comparative Politics	4
POL SCI 4	Introduction to Political Theory	4
POL SCI 5	Introduction to International Relations	4
PSYCH 1	General Psychology	3
PUB POL 101	Introduction to Public Policy Analysis	4
RHETOR 10	Introduction to Practical Reasoning and Critical Analysis of Argument	4
SOCIOL 1	Introduction to Sociology	4

World Regions

Students must take one of the following lower division courses (or their recognized equivalent, if transfer students):

AFRICAM 4A	Africa: History and Culture	4
AFRICAM 4B	Africa: History and Culture	4
AGRS 10A	Introduction to Ancient Greece	4
AGRS 10B	Introduction Ancient Rome	4
CHINESE 7A	Introduction to Premodern Chinese Literature and Culture	4
CHINESE 7B	Introduction to Modern Chinese Literature and Culture	4
HISTART 11	Introduction to European and American Art from the Renaissance to the Present	4
HISTORY 2	Comparative World History	4
HISTORY 4A	The Ancient Mediterranean World	4
HISTORY 4B	Medieval Europe	4
HISTORY 5	European Civilization from the Renaissance to the Present	4
HISTORY 6A	History of China: Origins to the Mongol Conquest	4
HISTORY 6B	Introduction to Chinese History: From the Mongols to Post-Mao China	4
HISTORY 8A	Latin American History: Becoming Latin America, 1492 to 1824	4
HISTORY 8B	Latin American History: Modern Latin America	4
HISTORY 10	African History	4
HISTORY 11	Introduction to the Civilizations and Cultures of South Asia	4
HISTORY 12	The Middle East	4
HISTORY 14	Introduction to the History of Japan	4

ISF 10	Enduring Questions and Great Books of the Western Tradition	4
JAPAN 7A	Introduction to Premodern Japanese Literature and Culture	4
JAPAN 7B	Introduction to Modern Japanese Literature and Culture	4
SEASIAN 10A	Course Not Available	4
SEASIAN 10B	Course Not Available	4

A Committee of faculty advisers will have the discretion, in unusual cases, of accepting applications to the ISF program from students who have completed, with a minimum B- grade, upper division courses that have adequately prepared them for their designated research program and that fulfill the spirit of the prerequisite requirements of disciplinary and regional preparation for the major. Finally, additional courses can be added to each of the two lists as deemed appropriate by the director and the faculty advisory board.

For transfer students, it is strongly recommended that this requirement be completed before enrolling at Berkeley. Transfer students must submit syllabi of courses already taken to their ISF faculty adviser for approval. Both prerequisite courses must be taken for a letter grade.

Note that Academic Senate regulations stipulate that students must have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 before declaring any major in the College of Letters & Science and are required to declare a major by the time they have each completed 60 units.

Upper Division Requirement: Course of Study- 6 courses

Select a minimum of 20 upper division units (at least six courses) drawn from at least three fields or disciplines. Upon consent of an adviser, courses outside of the College of Letters & Science may be accepted when relevant, e.g., courses in Social Welfare, Journalism, Public Policy, City Planning, Business Administration, or Architecture. (For further information, please see Research Fields (<https://isf.ugis.berkeley.edu/research/>) on the program's website.) Upon approval from an ISF faculty adviser, a student may include one technical or natural science course as part of their course of study.

Upper Division Requirement: Core Methodology Courses- 2 courses

These courses provide an introduction to interdisciplinary theories and methodologies in the social sciences and the humanities.

ISF 100A	Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis	4
Select one of the following:		
ISF 100B	Interdisciplinary Theories of the Self and Identity	4
ISF 100C	Language and Identity	4
ISF 100D	Introduction to Technology, Society, and Culture	4
ISF 100E	Globalization of Human Rights and Humanitarian Laws	4
ISF 100F	Theorizing Modern Capitalism: Controversies and Interpretations	4
ISF 100G	Introduction to Science, Society, and Ethics	4
ISF C100G	Introduction to Science, Technology, and Society	4
ISF 100H	Introduction to Media and International Relations	4
ISF 100I	Consumer Society and Culture	4

ISF 100J	The Social Life of Computing	4
ISF 100K	Health, Wealth, Love, and Happiness	4
ISF 110	Fundamental Texts	4

Upper Division Requirement: Interdisciplinary Research Methods

ISF 189	Interdisciplinary Research Methods	4
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Upper Division Requirement: Senior Thesis

For further details on the requirements for the thesis, including the creative thesis option, please see the program's website (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-tnN_2oUnx-skOMYLo039k5Nlay4XR9W/view/).

ISF 190	Senior Thesis	4
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Undergraduate students must fulfill the following requirements in addition to those required by their major program.

For a detailed lists of L&S requirements, please see Overview tab to the right in this guide or visit the L&S Degree Requirements (<https://lsadvising.berkeley.edu/degree-requirements/>) webpage. For College advising appointments, please visit the L&S Advising (<https://lsadvising.berkeley.edu/home/>) Pages.

University of California Requirements

Entry Level Writing

All students who will enter the University of California as freshmen must demonstrate their command of the English language by fulfilling the Entry Level Writing requirement. Fulfillment of this requirement is also a prerequisite to enrollment in all reading and composition courses at UC Berkeley and must be taken for a letter grade.

American History and American Institutions

The American History and American Institutions requirements are based on the principle that all U.S. residents who have graduated from an American university should have an understanding of the history and governmental institutions of the United States.

Berkeley Campus Requirement

American Cultures

All undergraduate students at Cal need to take and pass this campus requirement course in order to graduate. The requirement offers an exciting intellectual environment centered on the study of race, ethnicity and culture of the United States. AC courses are plentiful and offer students opportunities to be part of research-led, highly accomplished teaching environments, grappling with the complexity of American Culture.

College of Letters & Science Essential Skills Requirements

Quantitative Reasoning

The Quantitative Reasoning requirement is designed to ensure that students graduate with basic understanding and competency in math, statistics, or computer/data science. The requirement may be satisfied by exam or by taking an approved course taken for a letter grade.

Foreign Language

The Foreign Language requirement may be satisfied by demonstrating proficiency in reading comprehension, writing, and conversation in a foreign language equivalent to the second semester college level, either by passing an exam or by completing approved course work taken for a letter grade.

Reading and Composition

In order to provide a solid foundation in reading, writing, and critical thinking the College of Letters and Science requires two semesters of lower division work in composition in sequence. Students must complete parts A & B reading and composition courses in sequential order by the end of their fourth semester for a letter grade.

College of Letters & Science 7 Course Breadth Requirements

Breadth Requirements

The undergraduate breadth requirements provide Berkeley students with a rich and varied educational experience outside of their major program. As the foundation of a liberal arts education, breadth courses give students a view into the intellectual life of the University while introducing them to a multitude of perspectives and approaches to research and scholarship. Engaging students in new disciplines and with peers from other majors, the breadth experience strengthens interdisciplinary connections and context that prepares Berkeley graduates to understand and solve the complex issues of their day.

Unit Requirements

- 120 total units
- Of the 120 units, 36 must be upper division units
- Of the 36 upper division units, 6 must be taken in courses offered outside your major department

Residence Requirements

For units to be considered in "residence," you must be registered in courses on the Berkeley campus as a student in the College of Letters & Science. Most students automatically fulfill the residence requirement by attending classes at Cal for four years, or two years for transfer students. In general, there is no need to be concerned about this requirement, unless you graduate early, go abroad for a semester or year, or want to take courses at another institution or through UC Extension during your senior year. In these cases, you should make an appointment to meet an L&S College adviser to determine how you can meet the Senior Residence Requirement.

Note: Courses taken through UC Extension do not count toward residence.

Senior Residence Requirement

After you become a senior (with 90 semester units earned toward your B.A. degree), you must complete at least 24 of the remaining 30 units in residence in at least two semesters. To count as residence, a semester must consist of at least 6 passed units. Intercampus Visitor, EAP, and UC Berkeley-Washington Program (UCDC) units are excluded.

You may use a Berkeley Summer Session to satisfy one semester of the Senior Residence requirement, provided that you successfully complete 6 units of course work in the Summer Session and that you have been enrolled previously in the college.

Modified Senior Residence Requirement

Participants in the UC Education Abroad Program (EAP), Berkeley Summer Abroad, or the UC Berkeley Washington Program (UCDC) may meet a Modified Senior Residence requirement by completing 24 (excluding EAP) of their final 60 semester units in residence. At least 12 of these 24 units must be completed after you have completed 90 units.

Upper Division Residence Requirement

You must complete in residence a minimum of 18 units of upper division courses (excluding UCEAP units), 12 of which must satisfy the requirements for your major.

Mission

The Interdisciplinary Studies Field Major (ISF) is a unique major on campus in that it requires students to engage in a major research project. This enables them not only to engage in qualitative and/or quantitative research but also to organize, synthesize, and communicate—in oral and written form—relevant data and results against the background of evolving theories and key concepts in the social sciences and/or humanities. As student research interests change in relation to larger patterns of social, cultural, and technological transformations, the department carefully monitors existing methodological courses to allow for ongoing flexibility with regard to innovative key concepts and new theoretical tools.

Learning Goals for the Major

1. Develop strong interdisciplinary research skills by creating a course of study in the context of which students can explore new phenomena, problems, themes, and issues pertaining to larger social, cultural, technological, and historical transformations.
 - Develop research question against the background of at least three disciplinary fields.
 - Learn to develop a research proposal, which integrates multilingual assets and/or multicultural capacities and/or fieldwork experiences or internships.
 - Gain excellent skills to access library services.
 - Develop structure of research thesis, argument, and bibliography.
 - Gain historical and geographical knowledge of relevance to the research project.
 - Link undergraduate research interests to post-graduation plans for graduate school and/or professional life.
2. Acquire awareness of methodological approaches in the social sciences and/or humanities in order to apply interdisciplinary methods and key concepts to the study and analysis of a particular social or cultural phenomenon under conditions of larger social and global transformations.
 - Learn about the most important theoretical traditions of the transatlantic social sciences and/or humanities.
 - Study central concepts embedded in the dominant social science methodologies and or humanities methodologies.
 - Explore new social theories emerging from the larger context of global and technological transformations.
 - Participate in the expansion of conceptual innovation and creativity through the exploratory formation of new concepts with the capacity to empirically grasp new social and technological phenomena.
3. Expand critical reading, thinking, analytical, and technological skills acquired in upper division courses through their application in the context of the research project.
 - Explore extent, relevance, and limits of traditional conceptual apparatuses to ongoing undergraduate research project.
 - Evaluate quality of arguments, ideas, and concepts in support of the thesis.
 - Translate ideas and concepts into a variety of environments in relation to the thesis.
 - Pursue field work abroad if applicable.
 - Integration of technological innovations, networks, and the internet in the expansion of critical acquisition of knowledge in a global, informational, and networked world.
4. Demonstrate organizational, argumentative, multilingual, and communicative skills through successful design, structuration, execution, and presentation of a major interdisciplinary research project.
 - Organization of research data, argument, and theoretical framework.
 - Integration of assets and capacities in the research project.
 - Communicate research results on the basis of multimedia technologies.
 - Preparation of thesis in print media.

Major maps are experience maps that help undergraduates plan their Berkeley journey based on intended major or field of interest. Featuring student opportunities and resources from your college and department as well as across campus, each map includes curated suggestions for planning your studies, engaging outside the classroom, and pursuing your career goals in a timeline format.

Use the major map below to explore potential paths and design your own unique undergraduate experience:

View the Interdisciplinary Studies Major Map. (<https://discovery.berkeley.edu/getting-started/major-maps/interdisciplinary-studies-field/>)

Interdisciplinary Studies

ISF 10 Enduring Questions and Great Books of the Western Tradition 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020

This course is a broad survey of major canonical works ("Great Books") emphasizing from the premodern traditions of Western Civilization since the Greeks. These texts offer responses to central questions that, across the disciplinary divides, continue to inform contemporary work in the social sciences and the humanities. By considering these enduring questions and the responses of writers in Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern Europe, we seek to examine core issues of the liberal arts as they find expression across what would later become disciplinary divisions.

Objectives & Outcomes

Course Objectives: To offer students an intense engagement with canonical thinkers of the western tradition, demonstrating the enduring nature of their queries and questions across the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students are expected to acquire a familiarity with many core debates in the western intellectual tradition, and to be able to identify the pre-disciplinary and interdisciplinary roots of contemporary inquiries in the social sciences and humanities.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Bhandari

ISF C39A Freshman/Sophomore Seminar 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2024

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester.

Rules & Requirements

Credit Restrictions: Students will receive no credit for GERMAN C39Z after completing ISF 39A. A deficient grade in GERMAN C39Z may be removed by taking ISF 39A.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final Exam To be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

Instructor: Tang

Also listed as: GERMAN C39Z

ISF 50 Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence 3 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2019

It's hard not to open a newspaper or magazine today and see claims being made for artificial intelligence. Advocates argue that software programs will now be able to even perform creative jobs (as opposed to just routine ones) and that this is both a matter of celebration and concern. Critics argue that these claims are hyperbolic, while others argue that they are too close to reality and an indication of how much autonomy we have ceded to machines. In this course, we will pick apart all of these claims. We will ask: how have different human societies conceived of "intelligence," natural or artificial, and how has this varied with place and time?

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Instructor: Kelkar

ISF 60 Technology and Values 3 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2020, Spring 2018

If science and technology are value-laden activities, then where exactly do the values lie? In this class, we will pick apart the black-box of science and technology and look for values not just in terms of bad actors, corruption, or "implications," but in the processes that constitute modern technoscience itself. These processes include: the ways in which researchers construct problems, solutions, facts, and artifacts; the norms, standards, stories, and patronage relations that underlie science and technology; and finally, how the future is imagined and realized. Readings will include academic and journalistic texts as well as science fiction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 61 Moral Reasoning and Human Action: The Quest for Judgment 3 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2017, Fall 2016, Spring 2015

This is an interdisciplinary survey course that seeks to understand how we define justice, evil, and individual responsibility in modern society. In particular we are going to probe carefully how humans reflect on and practice the process of moral reasoning. We will focus on human behavior in extreme situations: war, life and death conflicts, genocide and mass killing, as well as competing conceptions of human freedom. The course has a distinctive dual purpose. On the one hand we want to encourage the learning of critical thinking skills. This includes the ability to systematically evaluate information and competing moral claims. Also, it is intended as an exposure to the interdisciplinary approach. That is, how can different perspectives illuminate the same issue? With this in mind the course draws on important work from philosophy and ethics, social psychology, jurisprudential analysis, historical-political accounts, and personal memoirs.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 62 Representations of Self-Deception in the Modern World 3 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2014, Fall 2012, Spring 2012

In this course, we will utilize works in the humanities and the social sciences in order to explore a number of dimensions of self-deception in the modern world. The focus will be upon the willingness to falsify both personal life as well as one's position in the public sphere. The course will begin with an examination of the psychological dimension, emphasizing the importance of the nature of unconscious experience. In this context, we will examine how self-awareness is shaped by personal relationships, especially family arrangements. In addition, we will look at the manner in which people often engage in acts of self-deception with regard to the political realm.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 98 Directed Group Study 1 - 3 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022

Seminars for the group study of selected topics not covered by regularly scheduled courses. Topics will vary from semester to semester.

Rules & Requirements

Credit Restrictions: Enrollment is restricted; see the Introduction to Courses and Curricula section of this catalog.

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Offered for pass/not pass grade only. Final exam not required.

ISF 100A Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024

This course, required of all ISF majors but open to all students, provides an introduction to the works of foundational social theorists of the nineteenth century, including Karl Marx and Max Weber. Writing in what might be called the “pre disciplinary” period of the modern social sciences, their works cross the boundaries of anthropology, economics, history, political science, sociology, and are today claimed by these and other disciplines as essential texts. We will read intensively and critically from their respective works, situating their intellectual contributions in the history of social transformations wrought by industrialization and urbanization, political revolution, and the development of modern consumer society.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-4 hours of lecture and 1-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 8-10 hours of lecture and 0-2.5 hours of discussion per week
8 weeks - 6-7.5 hours of lecture and 0-1.5 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 100B Interdisciplinary Theories of the Self and Identity 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Summer 2025 Second 6 Week Session, Spring 2024

This course will explore how people come to develop and value the self as well their specific social identities. The course will draw on anthropology, sociology, neurobiology and philosophy to grapple with that which is most intimate yet often most opaque to us: our own selves. Yet we shall also explore the cultural limits of our unstable understanding of our individuated selves as well as the dialectic of self and other in the formation of identity.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 10 hours of lecture per week
8 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Bhandari

ISF 100C Language and Identity 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023

This course examines the role of language in the construction of social identities, and how language is tied to various forms of symbolic power at the national and international levels. Drawing on case studies from Southeast Asia, Europe, Canada, and the U.S., we will pay special attention to topics such as the legitimization of a national language, the political use of language in nation-building processes, the endangerment of indigenous languages, and processes of linguistic subordination and domination. This course will be interdisciplinary in its attempt to understand language in terms of history, politics, anthropology and sociology.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture per week
8 weeks - 5.5 hours of lecture per week
10 weeks - 4.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Instructor: Xu

ISF 100D Introduction to Technology, Society, and Culture 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Summer 2024 First 6 Week Session, Spring 2024

This course surveys the technological revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries, it then focuses on the development of the computer and the Internet. The final part examines the impact of the Internet on social movements.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-4 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture per week
8 weeks - 6 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 100E Globalization of Human Rights and Humanitarian Laws 4 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2025 Second 6 Week Session, Summer 2020 First 6 Week Session, Summer 2019 First 6 Week Session

The violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, growing use of AI and drone technology in warfare, ill treatment of detainees and failure to protect people's basic rights by the state, international community and non-state actors have plagued today's globalized world. Gross human rights violations happen on camera. This course aims to critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of the global human rights regime, the limitations of the state-centric human rights protection mechanism, the current controversies about genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, apartheid and occupation, collective punishment, and rights to self-defense, and the prospect for peace, security and social justice in the era of globalization.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 8-10 hours of lecture per week
8 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Quamruzzaman

ISF 100F Theorizing Modern Capitalism: Controversies and Interpretations 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023

The focus of this course will be on the various ways the nature and trajectory of modern capitalism has been interpreted. Our stress will be on post-Marxist works of analysis. The initial focal point will be on the work of Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter, as well as important current debates in economic history and social theory generated by their work. Both Weber and Schumpeter display a strong fascination and elaboration with the work of Marx. The way they analyze Marx is very revealing about the way contemporary analysts seek to understand the capitalist system. We will also consider a number of current efforts that look at the systemic nature of capitalism. In particular, we are interested in how economic historians now see the development of capitalism. We also want to examine the Weberian tradition in terms of the role of culture in shaping economic behavior. Debates about the nature of globalization will also be considered as well as analysis of the changing nature of work.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 10 hours of lecture per week
8 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Klee

ISF 100G Introduction to Science, Society, and Ethics 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2022, Fall 2019, Spring 2017

This interdisciplinary course will explore whether it has proven possible and desirable to understand society through value-free and positivistic scientific methods as predominantly developed in the transatlantic worlds of the 19th centuries. We shall explore questions that may be applied to the realms of public health and human biology, or to the social sciences generally, including anthropology, sociology, economics, and political science.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-4 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 7-9.5 hours of lecture and 0-2.5 hours of discussion per week
8 weeks - 5.5-7 hours of lecture and 0-2 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam not required.

ISF 100H Introduction to Media and International Relations 4 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2022 First 6 Week Session, Fall 2017, Spring 2015

How have international actors used media to construct public opinion about salient issues, such as war, terrorism and intervention, international trade and finance, and global warming and resource depletion? The purpose of this course is to introduce students to key concepts, methods, and theories in the analysis of media effects, particularly in the areas of public opinion formation and international relations.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4-4 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 10 hours of lecture per week
8 weeks - 6-8 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 100I Consumer Society and Culture 4 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2025 First 6 Week Session, Spring 2025, Summer 2024 Second 6 Week Session

In many ways, consumption defines our lives – our identities as consumers are even more important, some would argue, our identities as workers or producers. But what are the implications of a society in which “you are what you consume?” In this class, we will address questions such as: Under what conditions does a “consumer society” develop? What does global commodity chain tell us about colonialization, global inequality, and environmental injustice? How can we shape the life cycle of basic commodities—from raw materials to iPhones—in a socially sustainable way? This course will be interdisciplinary in its attempt to understand consumer society and culture in terms of political economy, geography, history, anthropology and sociology.

Objectives & Outcomes

Course Objectives: The goal of this course is to provide students with a broad overview of debates and theories about consumption, and to provide them with an opportunity to explore a consumption-related topic themselves.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Instructor: Xu

ISF 100J The Social Life of Computing 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023

In this class, we will look at computing as a social phenomenon: to see it not just as a technology that transforms but to see it as a technology that has evolved, and is being put to use, in very particular ways, by particular groups of people. We will be doing this by employing a variety of methods, primarily historical and ethnographic, oriented around a study of practices. We will pay attention to technical details but ground these technical details in social organization (a term whose meaning should become clearer and clearer as the class progresses). We will study the social organization of computing around different kinds of hardware, software, ideologies, and ideas.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Instructor: Kelkar

ISF 100K Health, Wealth, Love, and Happiness 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023

Health, wealth, love, and happiness are the most desirable yet tenuous elements of a satisfying life. To achieve them, there has been an overemphasis on wealth accumulation or economic growth. But does economic growth automatically translate into health, love, and happiness? When our environment is degraded with an increasing depletion of natural resources, can we live healthily and happily? Is economic growth sustainable without a healthy planet and healthy people? How do we achieve health, wealth, love, and happiness without harming nature and society? This course will critically examine these and other questions from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Objectives & Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will learn about:

- the main concepts, theories and controversies linking health to broader social and economic development;
 - the social, political, demographic and epidemiologic determinants of health in relation to levels of economic development;
 - the effect of economic policy, globalization, climate change, and urbanization on health;
 - the main components of an effective healthcare policy;
 - how to compare health policies of different countries;
 - how policy shapes health and development in the developed and the developing world
- how health inequities within and between countries affect human development.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer: 10 weeks - 4.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Instructor: Quamruzzaman

ISF C100C Word and Image 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2011, Spring 2007, Spring 2004

This course is designed to sharpen our skills in understanding what happens when the world of images and words meet. Starting with the work from the Western "classical" tradition we will proceed to investigate how word/image constellations operate in a variety of media, including sculpture and poetry, painting and prose, death masks, tableaux vivants, photography, and advertising.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Sanders

Also listed as: SCANDIN C114

ISF C100G Introduction to Science, Technology, and Society 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Spring 2016, Spring 2015

This course provides an overview of the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) as a way to study how our knowledge and technology shape and are shaped by social, political, historical, economic, and other factors. We will learn key concepts of the field (e.g., how technologies are understood and used differently in different communities) and apply them to a wide range of topics, including geography, history, environmental and information science, and others. Questions this course will address include: how are scientific facts constructed? How are values embedded in technical systems?

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture and 1.5 hours of discussion per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture and 3.5 hours of discussion per week

8 weeks - 6 hours of lecture and 3 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructors: Mazzotti, Winickoff

Also listed as: HISTORY C182C/STS C100

ISF N100A Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

Introduction to central theoretical investigations concerning the construction and organization of social life. Using some works from the "classical" traditions of social theory as well as some examples of contemporary analysis, this course will explore such topics as the nature of power and social/historical change, the nature of economic production and consumption, the meaning of difference--racial, sexual, class--the development of institutions, etc.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture per week

8 weeks - 6 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam not required.

ISF N100D Introduction to Technology, Society, and Culture 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

This course surveys the technological revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries, then focuses on the development of the computer and the Internet. The final part examines the impact of the Internet on social movements.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture per week

8 weeks - 6 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam not required.

ISF 110 Fundamental Texts 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2022, Spring 2019

This course examines how thinkers have grappled with questions from ancient debates on justice and political order to contemporary critiques of liberal democracy. As a “great books” course, this class involves the extensive but rewarding reading of foundational texts. These includes works by thinkers such as Plato, Rousseau, Kant, Mill, Foucault, and Shklar. We will trace key shifts in political thought, from classical ideals of governance to modern debates on sovereignty, democracy, and capitalism. By engaging with foundational texts, students will gain a deeper understanding of the political structures that shape our world as well as the intellectual traditions in which they are embedded.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit up to a total of 8 units.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of lecture per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 10 hours of lecture per week

8 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 130 Humanistic Inquiry: Theories and Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 1995

What is theory and why should we engage with it? In what way does it inform our methods of interpreting literary and cultural production? How can theory enable us to formulate forms of critique? In this course, we will survey some of the most important theoretical traditions and methods from the 19th-21st century. The course is organized around three conceptual clusters that will allow us to trace lines of influence across centuries and theoretical traditions: 1. Commodity, Consciousness, Affect; 2. Colonialism, Race, Other; 3. Climate, Species, Entanglement. Each cluster will be paired with a literary study text to highlight the ways in which theory can inform methods of reading and analysis. All material in English; no German needed.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture and 1 hour of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 189 Interdisciplinary Research Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024

This class is an introduction to research methods, leading students through different units built around specific learning goals and practical exercises. The course is designed to teach a range of research skills, including the ability to formulate research questions and to engage in scholarly conversations and arguments; the identification, evaluation, mobilization, and interpretation of sources; methods and instruments of field research (interviews, questionnaires, and sampling) and statistical thinking; and the construction of viable arguments and explanation in the human sciences. At the same time, the course is designed to help students identify their own thesis topic, bibliography, and methodological orientation.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Majors and intended ISF majors

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 8 hours of seminar per week

8 weeks - 6 hours of seminar per week

10 weeks - 4.5 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

ISF 190 Senior Thesis 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024

The ISF Senior Thesis requirement is the capstone experience and final product of the ISF major. The thesis is a sustained, original, and critical examination of a central interdisciplinary research question, developed under the guidance of the ISF 190 instructor. The thesis represents a mature synthesis of research skills, critical thinking, and competent writing. As the final product of a student's work in the major, the thesis is not the place to explore a new set of disciplines or research problems for the first time, but should develop methods of inquiry and bridge the several disciplines that students have developed in their course of study.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Must have passed ISF 189 or an approved equivalent course. Senior standing; completion of ISF core courses; declared in the major. Equivalent courses must be approved by an ISF faculty advisor

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of seminar per week

Summer: 8 weeks - 6 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam not required.

ISF 197 Field Studies 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

Supervised experience relevant to the student's specific area of concentration in the Interdisciplinary Studies Field Major in off-campus organizations. Regular individual meetings with faculty sponsor and written reports required.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Upper division standing, declared in the Interdisciplinary Studies Field Major, and consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of fieldwork per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 2.5-10 hours of fieldwork per week

8 weeks - 1.5-7.5 hours of fieldwork per week

10 weeks - 1.5-6 hours of fieldwork per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Offered for pass/not pass grade only. Final exam not required.

Instructors: Ehrlich, Holub, Klee, Wren

ISF 198 Directed Group Study for Advanced Undergraduates 1 - 3 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2024, Fall 2023, Spring 2022

Seminars for the group study of selected topics not covered by regularly scheduled courses. Topics will vary from semester to semester.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Regulations set by the College of Letters and Science

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-3 hours of directed group study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Offered for pass/not pass grade only. Final exam not required.

Formerly known as: Social Sciences 198 and Humanities 198

ISF 199 Supervised Independent Study and Research for Upper Division Majors 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2024, Fall 2023, Summer 2011 10 Week Session
Directed individual independent study and research of special topics by arrangement with faculty.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Regulations set by the College of Letters and Science

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 2.5-10 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 2-8 hours of independent study per week

10 weeks - 1.5-6 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Interdisciplinary Studies Field Maj/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Offered for pass/not pass grade only. Final exam not required.