

## Interdisciplinary Studies Program

Dennis Sayers, Ed.D., *Program Director*

Office: Mary Stuart Rogers Educational Services Gateway Building 160  
Phone: (209) 667-3129

### **Master of Arts and Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies**

CSU Stanislaus offers the MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies program to accommodate students whose interests and needs are multidisciplinary. Each Interdisciplinary Studies program is a specially designed course of study, involving two or more disciplines, with a coherent theme. The program is designed for exceptional, individual cases only and provides an opportunity to pursue learning outside the framework of existing MA/MS programs at CSU Stanislaus or other institutions of higher education.

### **Teaching at a community college**

The MA/MS Interdisciplinary degree is not intended to culminate in a credential or license. Students considering this degree for the purposes of teaching at a community college should contact the community college district office regarding its policy governing the hiring of instructors and the requisite coursework.

### **Prerequisites**

The first step is to apply for admission to the University. The application form may be obtained from the Graduate School. After gaining admission to the University, the student applies for admission to the MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies program.

The successful applicant normally meets all of the following criteria:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university;
- A minimum of 18 upper-division or graduate semester units in the primary field(s) of the proposed MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies;
- A minimum grade point average of 3.0 in upper-division and graduate work completed at all educational institutions;
- The submission of the score on the Graduate Record Examination Writing Assessment Test;
- The submission of a proposed program document in accordance with published deadlines.



**Application Timelines**

Deadlines are posted online at [www.csustan.edu](http://www.csustan.edu). Students are encouraged to check the posted calendar for updates to the schedule of deadlines.

Students are urged to allow a full semester for the review process to occur. This timeline is necessary as the writing of the program proposal requires great thought and substantial consultation with the faculty committee, and revisions may be requested from the University Interdisciplinary Studies committee as well.

No more than nine (9) units of completed coursework prior to admission to the program may be included in the program. Completed coursework includes transfer units, units taken at CSU Stanislaus in a prior semester, and current units in progress (incomplete grades are considered as work in progress).

**Procedures**

- The student selects a major adviser and, in consultation with that adviser, chooses two additional faculty members to constitute the master's committee. The graduate committee must include faculty from at least two different disciplines represented in the program's coursework.
- The student completes the "Program Proposal for MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies."
- The student is required to bring the committee together to approve the proposal prior to its submission to the Graduate School.
- The Graduate School assesses the proposed program's compliance with the technical requirements for Interdisciplinary Studies. If these are not met, the proposal will be returned to the student for revision and resubmission.
- The major adviser and the student are invited to attend the meeting of the University MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) Committee, at which the student's proposal is reviewed. The major adviser and student may present information and may be asked questions. The admission decision will be communicated in writing to the major adviser, typically within one week following the meeting, and to the student the following week.
- The proposal must be approved by the master's committee, the major adviser's department chairperson, the IS committee and program director.
- When the student receives written approval by the program director, the student will be admitted to the program in Classified Standing.

- Any changes to the approved program require the approval of the major adviser, in consultation with the committee members, and the program director.
- All other University procedures and requirements for the completion of a graduate degree, including the thesis/project, are applicable. Please consult the University Catalog and the Graduate School.

**Criteria**

The "Request for MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies Program" proposal must follow the prescribed format. The proposal must demonstrate the student's high level of analytical and communication skills developed during undergraduate work. The GRE Writing Assessment score, the undergraduate and postbaccalaureate grade point average, and undergraduate preparation are used as indicators for success in the graduate program. The IS Committee welcomes quality proposals and employs the following criteria in its deliberations:

- Adherence to the technical requirements of the program (number of units, etc.);
- Clarity and completeness of the proposal, including the student's written communication skills in English;
- Thorough, clear statement of the academic objectives of the program;
- Clear explanation of how the program contributes to the student's professional objectives;
- Cogent justification for a multidisciplinary program;
- Explanation of the coherency of the program (the relatedness of the subject and title and the selection and relationship of the courses);
- Strength of the student's academic record and ability to complete a program of individualized graduate studies.

**Requirements**

The IS Committee will consider your proposal when (a) all program requirements are met, (b) the program proposal form is completed, (c) a comprehensive, essay-format response to the seven questions is completed, and (d) the GRE Writing Assessment score has been received.

Please use the following checklist before submitting your proposal to the Graduate School:

- I. The admission requirements are met. GRE Writing Assessment score is submitted with the proposal.

2. The program includes a minimum of 30 semester units for an MA or 36 semester units for an MS.
3. Only 4000\* and 5000-level courses may be counted toward the semester units required in the MA/MS Interdisciplinary Studies program.
4. At least 15 units for the MA or 18 units for the MS of 5000 level courses are included.
5. A minimum of 6 (for MA) or 9 (for MS) semester units in one or more disciplines other than the primary field of concentration are included.
6. A maximum of 9 units of independent study may be included in a student's program. Independent study courses must be described in the student's proposal in detail equivalent to a catalog course description and the instructor of record listed for each independent study course. Courses must be taken for a letter grade.
7. A 4000\*/5000-level research methods course appropriate for the discipline(s) is included in the program.
8. The proposal fully describes the method for the satisfactory completion of the CSU graduate writing competency requirement. Six (6) units of project or thesis work are included in a student's program. An oral defense is required.
9. A maximum of 9 units of transfer credit may be included in a student's program. Extension credits are not acceptable.
10. No more than 9 units completed prior to admission to the program may be included in the student's Interdisciplinary Studies program.
11. The IS program limits the CR/NC grading option to field studies, practica, and internships, not to exceed 20% of the required course work.
12. No grade below "B" may be applied toward the IS degree.
13. Competency in reading a foreign language, or an approved substitute competency, and/or a comprehensive examination may be required by the master's committee.
14. The program title (not to exceed 5 words) reflects the interdisciplinary focus of the program. The names of disciplines for which traditional degree programs exist may not be used.

\*Any 4000-level course offered within a student's IS program must be acknowledged by the instructor as containing assignments and grading which meet the higher standards of a graduate course. The methods a professor imposes to ensure more rigorous standards for graduate students are a matter of instructor preference. Additional readings, research papers, essay questions on examinations, and oral presentations are often employed to satisfy this requirement.

### **Student Learning Goals**

A student in the Interdisciplinary Studies program is expected to demonstrate:

### **Competence in Interdisciplinary Studies**

1. Advanced knowledge of the disciplinary knowledge, skills and values of their interdisciplinary study, the relationships among these disciplinary courses, and the ways in which these disciplinary perspectives are integrated and transformed through interdisciplinary studies.
2. Ability to analyze complex issues, draw reasoned conclusions, and evaluate effectiveness of proposed solutions to problems.
3. Understanding of global perspectives appropriate to the disciplines.

### **Communication**

4. Ability to write effectively in a variety of written and quantitative formats appropriate to the disciplines and the differing audiences and contexts.
5. Ability to express ideas orally, with attention to audience and effectiveness of delivery.
6. Advanced oral and written communication skills, complemented by ability to access and analyze information from a myriad of primary, print, and technological sources.

### **Research and Scholarship**

7. Advanced knowledge of research and scholarship appropriate to the interdisciplinary study.
8. Ability to work as individual researchers/scholars as well as in collaboration with others in contributing to the scholarship of interdisciplinary studies.

---

## Course Descriptions

### **MDIS 5900 Introduction to Graduate Field Research Methods (3 units)**

To provide basic knowledge and skills requisite to conducting field research; covers philosophical foundations of social research, research design, methods, analysis, basic SPSS, and interpretation. Quantitative and qualitative approaches will be considered. Prepares students to conduct research directed to meeting requirements for M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies thesis or project. (Successful completion of research prospectus meets Graduate Writing Competency Requirement.) (Fall)

### **MDIS 5940 Graduate Internship in Community College Teaching (1 unit)**

Provides graduate students the opportunity to obtain teaching experience in the community college under the supervision of a faculty member and a community college mentor. Includes a biweekly seminar requirement. Prerequisites: Graduate standing, consent of the graduate director, and selection by the community college.

### **MDIS 5960 Graduate Project (1-6 units)**

A terminal graduate project; intended for M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies majors. Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and major adviser.

### **MDIS 5980 Individual Study (1-4 units)**

For postbaccalaureate students prepared for independent work and in need of advanced integrated studies. May be repeated for a total of 6 units. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

### **MDIS 5990 Thesis (1-6 units)**

Thesis research; intended for M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies majors. May be repeated for a total of 6 units. Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and approval of major adviser.

### **MDIS 7005 Continuing Thesis or Project (0 units)**

Non-credit course. Applicable to those students who have completed all registration for graduate course work and who have registered for the maximum number of thesis or project units required by their program. Students must register each semester or term until they have secured faculty approval for their theses or projects.