

The Integrative Studies Major

The Integrative Studies program at St. Norbert College offers an interdisciplinary course of study to provide students the opportunity to broaden and diversify their knowledge and skills across an array of curricular disciplines. The Integrative Studies Major is intended as a *second* major to complement and contextualize the learning of discipline-specific competencies in the first major. It is a way of bringing the best features of a liberal arts education into powerful conjunction with the career training our students seek, instilling in them the qualities of mind and character—and the “soft skills”—that employers today report they want in the college graduates they would hire.

Course work consists of a two-credit introductory course in the first year matched with a two-credit seminar in the first semester of the junior year, with an additional nine courses selected from thematically linked offerings that will be identified as contributing to the requirements for the major. Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of the major, six of the nine courses must be taken in a division other than the one in which the first major is housed. Students will produce a Signature Work in the senior year devoted to a specific problem identified in the junior year seminar and demonstrating competencies acquired over the breadth of their learning experience.

The program is designed to empower students to take control over their education. There is no set roster of courses required for the IS major, no boxes to check. Courses will be selected in consultation with an ISM adviser in accordance with the student’s own sense of where they want to go in life and what contributions they would make to their world. Students will be trained in the use of a web-based platform where they can develop a professional digital identity, and organize and present their work to an audience beyond the college context.

The introductory course and the seminar will enable students to network with area and regional employers to develop an appreciation for real-world problem-solving and an understanding of the workplace environment in which those problems are addressed.

IDIS 180: Introduction to Integrative Studies

This course will survey the recent literature in the Integrative (or Interdisciplinary) Studies movement in higher education today articulating the need for, and benefits of this form of study for students seeking to find their place in the contemporary workplace and in the world of affairs.

The interdisciplinary and synthetic nature of the learning that inspires the program aims to provide students with the broad array of skills and diversified knowledge that employers today are seeking in the college graduates they would hire. Students will also be given the opportunity to clarify their interests and discern the special talents they possess in their pursuit of a satisfying career and a life well-lived.

Course materials will include foundational readings drawn from disciplines across the college curriculum as well as articles from scholarly journals and contemporary periodicals.

A two-credit, seven-week course; non-Core, non-Writing Intensive; First-Year students only.