

**Program Administrator:** AVP Academic Affairs/Dean of Academic Programs

**Program Coordinator:** Dr. John P. Dirkse

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**Faculty:** All faculty members affiliated with any CSUB graduate program.

### **Program Description**

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies provides an opportunity for students who wish to pursue special interests or career goals that are not met by existing graduate programs. For this student, the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies offers the opportunity to create a unique master's degree program that is not otherwise available among the current graduate programs at CSUB.

This individualized master's degree program requires a minimum of 45 quarter units, although some individual programs of study may require additional units. At least 35 quarter units must be earned by taking graduate courses (courses numbered 500 or 600). The individualized graduate Plan of Study is expected to be academically challenging involving two or more disciplines that relate to an identified coherent theme. The Plan of Study should lead the student beyond cursory knowledge of disciplines to a substantive inquiry that connects and synthesizes various perspectives, theories, and/or skills. This interdisciplinary degree program is suitable only for students who are self-motivated and independent, who are able to clearly delineate the objective(s) of their studies, and who have a professional and/or academic background which will allow advanced study in the disciplines combined in the proposed program.

This interdisciplinary studies degree program can be structured to suit specific professional/career needs and be tailored to meet idiosyncratic academic objectives. While it is not possible to predict the employment opportunities for graduates of such a program, the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies provides a vehicle for meeting the needs of students with unusual, creative, and interdisciplinary academic and/or professional goals. Use of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies for purposes of professional accreditation/licensure should be validated with the appropriate agency to ensure that the program meets the needed professional requirements.

**Selection of the Program Committee Chair** - Selection of a Program Committee Chair is an important first step in the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program. The Chair is critical to the development of the student's Plan of Study. He/she should ordinarily represent the primary field of study in which the majority of the coursework will be taken. The Chair advises and guides students during the period of graduate study, and responds to any misgivings students may have while in the program. Students have a responsibility to schedule regular meetings with their Chair. Since this relationship is crucial in assisting students complete the graduate program, they need to choose a faculty member with whom they can have a close rapport and whose specialty is nearest to their own scholarly interests.

**Committee Selection** - Each MA student must have a Committee to read and guide the development of the graduate project or thesis. The student's Program Committee Chair and/or the AVP Academic Affairs/Dean of Academic Programs can provide assistance in forming the MA committee.

**Academic Advising** - It is essential that the graduate student stay in contact with the AVP Academic Affairs/Dean of Academic Programs and especially his/her Program Committee Chair, to help the student move expeditiously through the program and to ensure satisfactory completion of the Plan of Study.

### **APPLICATION AND ADMISSION**

## Application Procedure

Students seeking the Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies must apply to the University Office of Admissions and Records for admission as a post-baccalaureate unclassified student. Since admission to the University does not constitute admission to the graduate program in Interdisciplinary Studies, interested students should contact the Office of the AVP Academic Affairs/Dean of Academic Programs for additional information and application materials.

## Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission to the graduate program in Interdisciplinary Studies, the student must meet the following criteria and fulfill the requirements stated:

1. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited four-year college or university. Previous course work or self-study must be deemed satisfactory and acceptable by the Program Committee.
2. A minimum GPA of 3.00 (A=4.00) in the last 90 quarter units (60 semester units).
3. The establishment of a three-member Program Committee comprised of faculty representing programs included in the proposed interdisciplinary program. The Program Committee Chair, who serves as the primary advisor, must be from a department within the University that offers a graduate program.
4. A Plan of Study for the degree must be developed and approved by the graduate coordinator(s) of each participating graduate program, the chair(s) of each participating undergraduate department, the dean(s) of the school(s) in which the programs are located, and the AVP Academic Affairs/Dean of Academic Programs.
5. All graduate and post-baccalaureate students must satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) as soon as possible in their graduate study, unless they have already done so. Individual graduate programs have the option of stating when this requirement must be met. Graduate students who have not met this requirement may do so by passing the regularly scheduled examination (offered once a quarter) or by earning a "C" or better in one of the following courses: COMM 304 Technical and Report Writing; ENGL 305 Modes of Writing; COMM 306 News Writing and Reporting; ENGL 310 Advanced Writing; COMM 311 Feature Writing; ENGL 311 Writing Literary Analysis; HIST 300 Historical Writing; ADM 510 Advanced Technical Communication.

You will be exempt from the GWAR if you meet any of the four criteria below:

1. You graduated from a CSU or UC since 1980
2. As of Fall 2006, post-baccalaureate and graduate students with the following test scores (provided the test(s) were taken since 1980).  
**GMAT** 4.5 or higher on the writing portion of the GMAT  
**CBEST** 41 or higher on the writing portion of the CBEST  
**GRE** 4.5 or higher on the analytic writing portion of the GRE General Test
3. Post-baccalaureate and graduate students who have one or more articles published as first author in a refereed professional journal may submit their work for review to the chair of the university-wide GWAR committee with a formal request to waive the GWAR.
4. Post-baccalaureate and graduate students who already have an MA or MS in any discipline that included a master's thesis or project and are working on another degree or credential may submit their thesis or project for review to the chair of the university-wide GWAR committee with a formal request to waive the GWAR.

In the last two situations, waiver requests and supporting documents will be reviewed, and you will receive a decision in approximately two weeks.

Students from campuses other than a CSU or UC who believe they have met this requirement must submit a transcript, a course description, and a syllabus from an equivalent

course to the Composition Coordinator for evaluation. All students must satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) as soon as possible after being accepted as a graduate student by the University. This requirement may have been satisfied as an undergraduate at CSUB or another CSU campus or it may be met by passing the regularly scheduled examination or by successfully completing an approved course offered by the University.

### **International Students**

In addition to meeting the requirements for admission given above, international students must take **TOEFL and have a score of 550 or higher (or 213 on the new conversation scale for the computer-based TOEFL exam).**

### **Student Standings**

1. **Classified Graduate States** - Students who fully meet the admission requirements listed above will be considered as Classified Graduate Students.
2. **Conditionally Classified Graduate Status** - Students meeting most, but not all of the admission requirements may be admitted as Conditionally Classified Graduate Students. Students who are conditionally classified are limited to 13.5 quarter units that will count toward their Plan of Study. Upon completion of the admission requirements, the student will be administratively advanced to Classified Graduate Status.
3. **Post-Baccalaureate/Unclassified Standing** - Students accepted by the University for Post-baccalaureate Study may take any graduate courses with approval from the instructor. These courses may be taken solely for personal pleasure or as a means of establishing a graduate student record that will lead to classified standing. Students are encouraged to apply for admission to the Master's in Interdisciplinary Studies no later than after completion of 10 quarter units.
4. **Advancement to Candidacy** - Students will be advanced to candidacy when they have met the following criteria:
  - a. Have achieved a Classified Graduate Student Status;
  - b. Completed 35 quarters of graduate work applied toward the Plan of Study with a GPA of 3.0 or better;
  - c. Completed the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR); and
  - d. Are ready to begin work on the thesis or project.

### **Program Requirements**

The selection of courses as outlined in the approved Plan of Study will be guided by the nature of the interdisciplinary program in consultation with the three-member Program Committee. Students will be expected to meet all prerequisites for courses in their approved Plan of Study, prior to registering for the courses. No more than 13.5 quarter units of post-baccalaureate course work, taken prior to the approval of the Plan of Study, can be applied towards the requirements for the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies.

1. Completion of the Plan of Study, which must include a minimum of 45 quarter units of course work, of which 35 quarter units must be graduate courses (courses numbered 500 or 600). Courses numbered 400 may apply to the Plan of Study (10 quarter units maximum) with approval of the Program Committee. The granting of graduate credit for such 400-level coursework requires the submission of a "Petition for Graduate Credit" for each course.
2. Maintenance of a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in coursework applied to the Plan of Study. In general, courses with a grade less than a B (3.0) will not be accepted.
3. Completion of a thesis (INST 697) or a project (INST 698) that appropriately reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the Plan of Study. Students will elect either the thesis or the project track on the basis of appropriateness to the objectives for the interdisciplinary program and upon approval of the Program Committee.

Students who fail to complete their degree program within the seven-year limit may petition the Program Committee, with approval from the Program Chair and Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, to permit the revalidation of outdated courses.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **INST 697 Master's Thesis in Interdisciplinary Studies (5)**

Research in an approved area of study appropriate to the interdisciplinary nature of the degree conducted under the supervision of the student's Program Committee. An oral explanation and defense of the thesis is required. Offered on a credit, non-credit basis only.

### **INST 698 Master's Project in Interdisciplinary Studies (5)**

The project will be the application of both theory and methods appropriate to the interdisciplinary nature of the degree conducted under the supervision of the student's Program Committee. An oral explanation will be required. Offered on a credit, non-credit basis only.

### **INST 699 Individual Study (1-5)**

Independent investigation by the student in consultation with a professor in an area of major interest and approved by the student's Program Committee. Offered on a credit, no-credit basis only. May be repeated with different topics.