Core Curriculum Interdisciplinary Minor

The Core Interdisciplinary Minor will offer Core Curriculum students the opportunity to explore further a question or theme that fascinated them during their Core years. They will do so by:

1. taking six courses, building to
2. writing a capstone essay or project which they will have refined during a
3. two-credit capstone seminar.

This minor aspires to have a uniquely interdisciplinary and global reach. By taking courses in a range of different departments and disciplines, students will be enabled and encouraged to extend and give greater depth to their study of the texts, works of art, music, and key ideas of Western and other cultural traditions treated in Core.

Rationale:

1. FOCUS: students will explore an aspect of the curriculum in greater depth by taking relevant classes in various departments of CAS,
2. MENTOR: they will each work on their theme and the capstone essay under the close direction of a faculty mentor,
3. INTERDISCIPLINARY: they will deliberately pursue knowledge across disciplinary boundaries,
4. LEARNING COMMUNITY: through the capstone seminar they will participate in a small group of students who share a common intellectual background through Core, and they will present their work when it is finished within a Core-sponsored public event.

Requirements:

The Capstone Project: Students will complete their work in the minor – preparing a major paper or project – by participating in a two-credit capstone workshop. As a component of the minor, this workshop will enable students to synthesize, refine and share the conclusions they reached in pursuing their topics. We see this workshop as a model for interdisciplinary studies in which students communicate the results of their thinking and research with their peers in a shared learning environment. The workshop is designed to develop skills in writing, speaking and digital communication, and will also focus on presentation and public speaking. It will thus act as a “creative incubator” in which ideas can be nourished, developed and articulated. The students will present the results of their capstone projects at a public event associated with the Core banquet.

1 The Core Curriculum provides its students with an integrated study of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences (including math and computer sciences). Its approach is necessarily broad as Core courses, in general, span both the ancient and the contemporary worlds.
Six courses: To earn a minor in Core, students are required to complete a total of at least six courses, plus the two-credit capstone seminar. The required total of twenty-six credit hours will be made up of one two-course Core sequence (8 credits), at least four electives (totaling 16 credits), and one Core capstone seminar (2 credits). The Core courses must be completed prior to the capstone. Electives must be chosen from at least two different departments. At least two of the four electives must be at the 300-level or above, unless special permission to substitute is given by the faculty advisor.

Implementation

1. Any student who has taken one of Core’s four two-course sequences (CC 101 and CC 102; CC 201 and CC 202; CC 111 and CC 212; OR CC 112 and CC 211) is eligible to begin the minor.

2. Each student will choose a faculty advisor, with whom he or she will consult regularly. The advisor will be responsible for approving all courses taken for the minor and will supervise the writing of the capstone project.

3. Students in the Core Minor must have a central idea, theme or question they wish to pursue through the minor, which they will identify and pursue in conjunction with their advisor. Examples of such interests are listed in the appendix below, on pp. 3-4. Students will begin their pursuit of the minor by submitting to their advisor a brief written statement of their particular interest; they must consult with their advisor regularly to ensure a coherent plan of study.

    A list of possible pathways follows in the appendix, though the aim of the minor is for students to come up with their own topics of interest, rather than precisely following one of these suggestions.

Administration

The minor will be overseen by a committee made up of the Director and Assistant Director of Core and one other faculty member associated with the Core Curriculum, to be chosen by the Director and Assistant Director. The committee will approve each student’s selection of an advisor.
APPENDIX

i. A student who has taken CC 101 and CC 102 (HU) might develop an interest in the **relation of literature to social and national identity**. The student might then take CC 112 (SS), which studies culture, ethnography and religion or CC 201, which examines the emergence of Europe from Petrarch to Milton. He or she might then explore the relation of culture and identity in a history course such HI 191: What Is Europe? or HI 315: The American West, while further exploring national literary traditions in courses such as CL 221: Greek Tragedy, EN 392: Modern Irish Literature or LJ 282: The Samurai in Myth and History.

ii. A student taking CC 201 and CC 202 (HU) after CC 112 (SS) might become interested in **encounters with different cultures and religions** in a “national” work such as Montaigne or Don Quixote. The student might continue to explore the intersection of cultures by taking RN 410: Religion, Community and Culture in Medieval Spain; or by examining background issues in a course such as HI 213: Sacred and Secular Power in Christianity and Islam, or going on to consider different examples of cultural mixing in courses such as LX 420: Spanish in the United States; RN 312: Buddhism in America or AN 327: Islam in Africa.

iii. A student might also become interested in the various aspects of **aesthetics** from their study in Core, and so pursue courses such as PH 259: Philosophy of the Arts; PH 488: Topics in Aesthetics; AN 397: Anthropology and Film: Ways of Seeing; CAS AH 210: Learning to See; NE 330: Introduction to Computational Models of Vision; CFA TH 101: Introduction to Aesthetics and Dramatic Literature; CFA FA 300: Insight into the Arts; PY 231: The Physics in Music.

iv. A student taking the Core Humanities sequence might become interested in the **dialogue between literary themes and forms**, in, for example, the epic tradition from Homer to Virgil to Dante to Milton and continue to explore the further use of literary works in other traditions, in courses such as XL 351: The Faust Tradition; EN 463: Hamlet/Macbeth: Appropriation and Performance, or XL 441: 1001 Nights in the World Literary Imagination, and in other media, in courses such as AH 257: Renaissance Art; CL 325: Greek Tragedy and Film, or CI 465: Modernity / Shakespeare / Film.

v. From Mesopotamia to the Greek **polis** and from Rome to Mrs. Dalloway's London, the **city** is a central theme in Core. Students could further explore the role of the city in a number of ways, literary, historical, sociological, or environmental, drawing from the many courses on offer in CAS, such as AM 202: What’s Boston?: AN 309: Boston: An Ethnographic Approach; RN 220: Holy City, Jerusalem in Time, Space and Imagination; HI 226: Cities and Cultures; AH 381: London Architecture and Urbanism; AR 353: Urbanism in Ancient Mesoamerica; AN 220: Urban Anthropology; SO 244: Urban Sociology; AR 290: Human Impacts on Ancient Environments, or GE 475: Urban Ecology.
vi. **War** runs throughout Core from *Gilgamesh* to WW II. A student could further explore this theme in a number of different directions, in, for example, CL 202: Warfare in Antiquity; HI 284: History of War; HI 291: Intimate Histories of War, or PS 372: Psychological Perspectives on War and Peace. A student might also examine specific conflicts or areas of the world in comparison with what has been studied in Core, for example in HI 204: History of the Crusades; HI 328: The Civil War Era or AN 347: Afghanistan, or by looking at various depictions of war, as in CL 221: Greek Tragedy; AH 391: Twentieth-century Art to 1940, or XL 281: Holocaust Literature and Film.

vii. A student who has taken CC 201 and CC 202 (HU) along with CC 211 might become interested in the **history of Revolution**, from the Corcyrean Revolution in Ancient Greece through the English, American and French Revolutions of the 17th and 18th century to the anti-colonial revolutions of the twentieth century. A student might want to take a deeper look at revolution in a historical, political and sociological framework through courses such as HI 341: Political and Cultural Revolution; HI 266: French Revolution and Napoleon; HI 299: History of the Civil Rights Movement; and HI 453: Three Revolutions while also linking one or two of these historical moments to revolutions in art and culture in courses such as LG 282: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud; AH 389: Impressionism; EN 380: The Twentieth Century African-American Novel or AA 388: Black Radical Thought.

viii. A student who has been interested by the conjunction of Modernism in CC 202 and Quantum Theory and Relativity in CC 212 could further explore ways in which **science is linked to broader cultural questions** in courses such as RN 242: Magic, Science and Religion; PH 272: Science Technology and Values; HI 302: Science and American Culture; BI 119: Sociobiology; GE 250: The Fate of Nations: Climate, Resources and Institutions and SO 277: Technology and Society.

ix. The **theme of journeys**, which is pervasive in Core, could be further pursued in courses such as RN 102: Sacred Journeys; AH 368: The Grand Tour; AN 245: Moving Experiences: Cultures of Tourism and Travel or XL 384: Arthurian Literature.

x. Courses on **individual thinkers** like Plato, Shakespeare, or Confucius could also be pursued. For example, a student who wished to continue study of the Bhagavad-Gita might take, in addition to CC 102, courses such as RN 213: Hinduism; PH 246: Indian Philosophy; HI 234: Introduction to India and South Asia; LN 225: Tradition and Modernity in Indian Film and Literature; RN 424: Core Texts and Motifs of World Religions: East or, for contrast, RN 206: Scriptures in World Religions.

xi. A student interested in the **Reformation** might similarly take, along with CC 112 and CC 201, HI 209, the Reformation; RN 310: The Reformation: Religious Conflict in Early Modern Europe, while one interested in the Enlightenment might take, alongside CC 202 and CC 211, PH 412: Philosophy of the Enlightenment; HI 215: The European Enlightenment; CAS AH 368: The Grand Tour; or CAS RN 469: Critique of Religion, while a student who has studied French might take LF 453: The French Enlightenment or LF 562: The Age of Versailles.