INTEGRATED STUDIES

Coordinator, Professor Margaret McFadden

Integrated Studies is an innovative academic program designed to introduce students to methods of interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation and to encourage them to use these methods to explore important questions about varied aspects of human experience. Taken together, integrated studies courses provide a strong foundation in the liberal arts, on which students can build during their four years at Colby. The program is supported by grants from the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation of New York.

Each year the program organizes several clusters of two or three courses that focus on a relatively brief historical period, studying that era from the perspectives of different disciplines. Students must sign up for all courses in the cluster. Integrated studies clusters allow students to explore a subject in great depth, working closely with a team of faculty members in small, seminar-style classes. Students learn how to gain mastery of an important topic in considerable depth and from varied points of view. At the same time, the clusters provide a coherent context in which students can explore vital questions about human experience, pursuing an understanding of moral, political, aesthetic, spiritual, and epistemological issues as they are relevant to the cluster topic.

This intensive experience enables students to develop important intellectual capacities, including training in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary critical thinking and problem solving, critical writing, and meaningful participation in small-group discussions. Most clusters also fulfill several all-College area distribution requirements, providing a broad, interdisciplinary liberal arts foundation for students’ subsequent work at Colby.

The courses within each cluster, which have no prerequisites, are described in the list of courses and are cross-listed in their respective departmental sections of this catalogue. Each course is offered for four credit hours. Enrollment in first-year clusters is limited to 16 students.

Course Offerings

IS126f  The Green Cluster  Students explore central questions in environmental philosophy, ethics, and politics, and learn the history, theory, and practice of environmental activism as they pursue their own activist projects. See Environmental Studies 126, and Philosophy 126 for course descriptions. Satisfies the First-year Writing (W1) and Social Science (S) distribution requirements.  Eight credit hours.  CARLSON, PETERSON

IS135  New York-Berlin: Modernism and its Discontents  New York and Berlin remain iconic locations of aesthetic, political, and social transformation. This two-course cluster asks what these pivotal cities of the 20th and 21st centuries—cities that occupy visual imaginations, underwrite ideals of social utopia, and destroy dreams and lives—teach us about the powerful forces that shape our worlds. We engage a range of cultural “texts”, from movies to literature to the built environment, and we situate them in larger historical, political, and economic contexts. An all-expenses-paid field trip to New York is central. See American Studies 135B and German 135 for course descriptions. Satisfies the First-Year Writing (W1), Arts (A), and Social Science (S) requirements.  Eight credit hours.

IS136  America in the Postwar World: 1945-1970  The United States in the postwar era waged a Cold War with the Soviet Union that verged on full-scale nuclear war, and it experienced upheaval in race, gender, and ethnic relations; politics; and culture. We will explore connections among these developments. How did music, literature, television, and film document and comment on the social and political rebellions that defined the era? How did changing opportunities of African Americans and women reshape cultural expression? And how did the development of a new consumer culture transform the nation? See American Studies 136A, 136B, and History 136 for course descriptions. Satisfies the Arts (A), First-Year Writing (W1), Historical Studies (H), and U.S. Diversity (U) requirements.  Twelve credit hours.

IS224  Global Maine  While Maine remains the whitest state in the union, demographic trends are rapidly changing many regions. Refugees, asylum seekers, medical and high-technology workers, undocumented farmworkers, and guest workers in the hospitality industry are transforming urban and rural areas alike. This two-course cluster introduces the diversity of immigrant experiences in Maine through ethnographic readings as well as collaborative documentary work with immigrant and immigrant-support organizations. It provides training in documentary techniques and the opportunity to create films with immigrant and immigrant-support community partners in Lewiston and Portland. See Anthropology 224 and Global Studies 224 for course descriptions. Satisfies Social Sciences (S) and U.S. Diversity (U) requirements.  Eight credit hours.

IS313  America in the 1970s  This two-course cluster investigates many aspects of American culture of the 1970s, locating varied cultural texts, objects, and developments in their economic, political, and social contexts, and exploring the ways they changed the nation and the world. See American Studies 313A and 313B for course descriptions. Satisfies the Social Sciences (S) requirement.  Eight credit hours.