

# Interdisciplinary Major

An interdisciplinary major enables a student to construct from two or more disciplines a course of study not available through one department. The student works out her program with two advisors and presents it to the chair of the interdisciplinary major for approval.

The interdisciplinary major consists of at least eight courses, including a course in research methods from one of the disciplines (or an equivalent introduction to sources and a coordinating tutorial chosen in consultation with the student's two advisors). The major in addition requires one internship related to the area of interest. The following restrictions will apply in all cases: 1) no more than two 100-level courses will count toward the major; 2) no more than two independent studies may count toward the major; and 3) at least four 300-level courses must be included in the major.

By the end of senior year, all interdisciplinary majors will submit a capstone portfolio to the chair of the program for evaluation. The capstone portfolio must contain the following items: 1) a résumé and cover letter, 2) a research paper (graded) related to their major topic, 3) the evaluation form from the supervisor of the required internship related to the major program of study, and 4) a personal essay evaluating the internship related to the major program of study with respect to the student's future career or education goals.

Possible subjects for interdisciplinary majors include a period, an idea, or a set of problems: work on the Renaissance in English, history, art, and music; work on human freedom in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and political science. With an interdisciplinary major, the possibilities are limited only by the student's imagination.

Hollins students have worked on such interdisciplinary majors as the following sample program:

## **Social Politics** (sample)

An investigation of the organization, methods, and structures of dominant societal groups, as well as those groups they dominate, and in particular their relationship to the ideals of democracy. Also included are the workings of societal change within social and political structural systems.

Courses completed in fulfillment of the interdisciplinary major requirements:

- COMM 238: Argumentation and Debate
- PHIL 254: Social and Political Philosophy
- POLS 248: Stonewall and After: The Politics of Positive Transformation

“I did an independent study with Art History Professor Kim Rhodes about women in photojournalism, which cumulated in a 30-page research paper. Part of my research involved attending an exhibit at the Newseum in Arlington about women photographers for *National Geographic* magazine.”

—Kelly Strawderman Freundt '03

- SOC 350: Special Topic - Women and Violence
- COMM 316: Contemporary Public Communication
- POLS 363: Constitutional Law
- ENG 3012: Introduction to Linguistics: Sociolinguistics (Taken at University College in Cork, Ireland)
- SOC 358: Methods of Social Research

## **Director**

Edwina Spodark, professor of French

## **What a few graduates have to say about the interdisciplinary major at Hollins**

Through the interdisciplinary major, **Kelly Strawderman Freundt '03, M.A.T. '06** “combined course work in photography, journalism, communication studies, political science, and anthropology, which contributed toward my career goal of becoming a photojournalist. My classes in Advanced Photographic Techniques, History of Photography, and State and Local Government greatly prepared me for my Short Term internship in the photography department of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. As an intern, I photographed the inauguration of Governor Mark Warner, his inaugural ball, the Opening Day of the Virginia General Assembly, the State of the Commonwealth address, and fiscal hearings for the state budget. Had I not taken state and local government with Professor Ed Lynch, I would not have understood the significance of the governmental proceedings that I photographed. I also walked into the Opening Day of the General Assembly having already met House Majority Leader Morgan Griffith during a political debate on campus.”

Department chair of the foreign language/ fine arts department, Kelly teaches Spanish in the International Baccalaureate (I.B.) program at Oscar Smith High School in Chesapeake, Va.

**Laura Tuggle Anderson '98** writes, “So many of my classes bridged the gap between departments. My major is a prime example of how much flexibility there is within and between departments at Hollins.”

Laura is associate director, alumnae and donor relations at Hollins University.