

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES FIELD (ISF) MAJOR INFORMATION SESSION

TUESDAY APRIL 16, 2024

[ISF.UGIS.BERKELEY.EDU](https://isf.ugis.berkeley.edu)



AGENDA

01

WHAT IS INTERDISCIPLINARY?

02

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

03

STRUCTURE OF THE MAJOR

04

RESEARCH FIELDS

05

COURSE OF STUDY

06

SENIOR THESIS

07

APPLICATION PROCESS

08

ADVISING

09

QUESTIONS



PLEASE MUTE AUDIO



OPEN CHAT WINDOW




HOLD QUESTIONS FOR
THE END



WHAT IS ISF?

ISF is a highly individualized major that offers students the unique opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary study, combining disciplines to form a nuanced understanding of social issues. The ISF program fosters a rigorous and empirically grounded approach to interdisciplinary questions through **a student-designed program of research and course of study, resulting in a senior thesis.**



isf.ugis.berkeley.edu

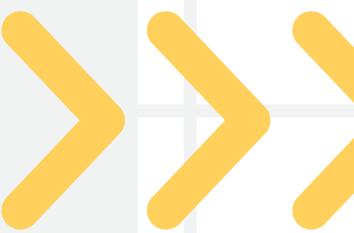


WHAT IS “INTERDISCIPLINARY”?

Disciplines: organized bodies of knowledge allowing for specific ways of seeing social reality; through one lens

E.g: Economics, English, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, etc.

Interdisciplinary studies: acknowledges the strengths of disciplinary knowledge while challenging traditional disciplinary boundaries; encourages students to explore complex social realities from multiple perspectives; through multiple lenses





MAJOR PREREQUISITES

LOWER DIVISION

DISCIPLINES

B– or higher required

Introduction to: any major discipline (Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Economics, Political Science, Geography, Rhetoric)

Transfer coursework equivalents are accepted.

WORLD REGIONS

B– or higher required

Review of a region outside of the U.S. for an extended period of time; most likely a world history/regional history course (Comparative History; [History of] Japan, Africa, Medieval Europe, etc.)

Transfer coursework equivalents are accepted.

***AP credit does not satisfy either major prerequisite.**

****Students can apply when both are complete, or one complete and one in-progress.**

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

UPPER DIVISION*

ISF CORE

4 total

Letter grade only

ISF 100A: Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis

ISF 100B-K (one course)

ISF 189: Interdisciplinary Research Methods

- take in second-to-last semester

ISF 190: Senior Thesis

- take in final semester

COURSE OF STUDY

6 courses, 20 units

Letter grade only

A minimum of 20 units (at least 6 courses) drawn from at least 3 fields or disciplines, with a maximum of 3 classes from one discipline. All courses a student self-selects for their Course of Study must be approved by their faculty advisor.

***Upper division: numbered 100–199**

STRUCTURE OF THE MAJOR



A self-chosen area of study that begins to address significant research problems in the social sciences and humanities from an interdisciplinary perspective.

RESEARCH FIELD



A collection of 6 upper division courses (and 20 units) that you design with the help of a faculty advisor.

- Must use at least 3 disciplines
- No more than 3 classes from any one discipline

COURSE OF STUDY



The Senior Thesis is a 30-40-page piece of sustained, original, and critical examination of a central interdisciplinary research question and is the culminating product of the ISF degree.

SENIOR THESIS

RESEARCH FIELD

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graph TD; A[RESEARCH FIELD] --> B[DOES NOT REPLICATE ANY EXISTING UC BERKELEY MAJOR]; A --> C[SHOWS HOW DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES AND METHODOLOGIES WILL BE USED TO ADDRESSED POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS];
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The diagram features a dark blue header box at the top with the text 'RESEARCH FIELD'. Two yellow arrows point downwards from this box to two separate light gray rectangular boxes. The left box contains the text 'DOES NOT REPLICATE ANY EXISTING UC BERKELEY MAJOR'. The right box contains the text 'SHOWS HOW DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES AND METHODOLOGIES WILL BE USED TO ADDRESSED POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS'. The background is a light gray grid, and there are yellow diagonal stripes in the corners of the gray boxes.

**DOES NOT REPLICATE
ANY EXISTING UC
BERKELEY MAJOR**

**SHOWS HOW
DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES
AND METHODOLOGIES
WILL BE USED TO
ADDRESSED POSSIBLE
RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

EXAMPLES

Law and Society

Philosophy, Political Science, Legal Studies, History, Ethnic Studies, Rhetoric, Sociology, etc.

Health and Illness

Demography, Sociology, Economics, Public Policy, Public Health, CNR, History, etc.

Science, Technology, and Society

Anthropology, Rhetoric, History, Psychology, Sociology, Data, English, CompSci, etc.

Visual Culture

Art Practice, Media Studies, Art History, Anthropology, English, Rhetoric

Other Research Field examples:

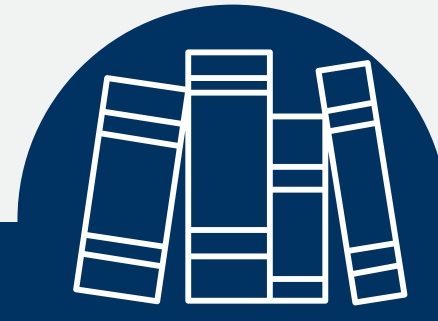
- Film, Modernity, and Digitalization
- Cultural Perspectives of Global Media
- Neocolonialism in Africa
- Evolution of User Interfaces
- Social Justice and Visual Storytelling
- Fashion and Culture
- Surveillance and Digital Technologies

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SENIOR THESIS

BUILDING YOUR COURSE OF STUDY

01

RESEARCH FIELDS

Look over the “ISF Research Fields” list in section 6.1 of the ISF Major Student Handbook or look through the Research Fields page on this website.

02

ACADEMIC GUIDE

Review the current list of [degree programs](#) at [UC Berkeley](#), then browse the [titles and descriptions of courses](#) in that major or department that relevant to your interests.

03

EXPERTISE DATABASE

Use the [Faculty Expertise Database](#) to explore on-campus faculty and researchers that are teaching or studying topics you are considering for the ISF major.

04

CONSULT WITH FACULTY

Discuss your proposal with an ISF faculty adviser prior to applying and when you need to make any changes to your plan.

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SENIOR THESIS

SENIOR THESIS

Development

Work with your faculty advisor and gain inspiration from peers as you complete your Course of Study to specify your thesis topic from your Research Field.

Form

The ISF Senior Thesis should be 30–40 pages in length and should contribute to and engage critically with scholarship on your chosen topic. It is written during enrollment in ISF 190.

Support

Your ISF Faculty Advisor and ISF 190 instructor (likely the same person) will work with you as you develop your topic over time during office hours, and while you write your thesis in both a seminar format and 1–1 meetings.





STEP 1

Attend an information session
OR meet with Michelle, the
Undergrad Major Advisor to
discuss general major info.

STEP 2

Meet with a faculty advisor to
discuss your Research Field
and Course of Study plans, or
get suggestions for this.

STEP 3

Fill out the application, write
your short answer responses,
gather unofficial transcripts as
needed. Consult faculty for
feedback.

STEP 4

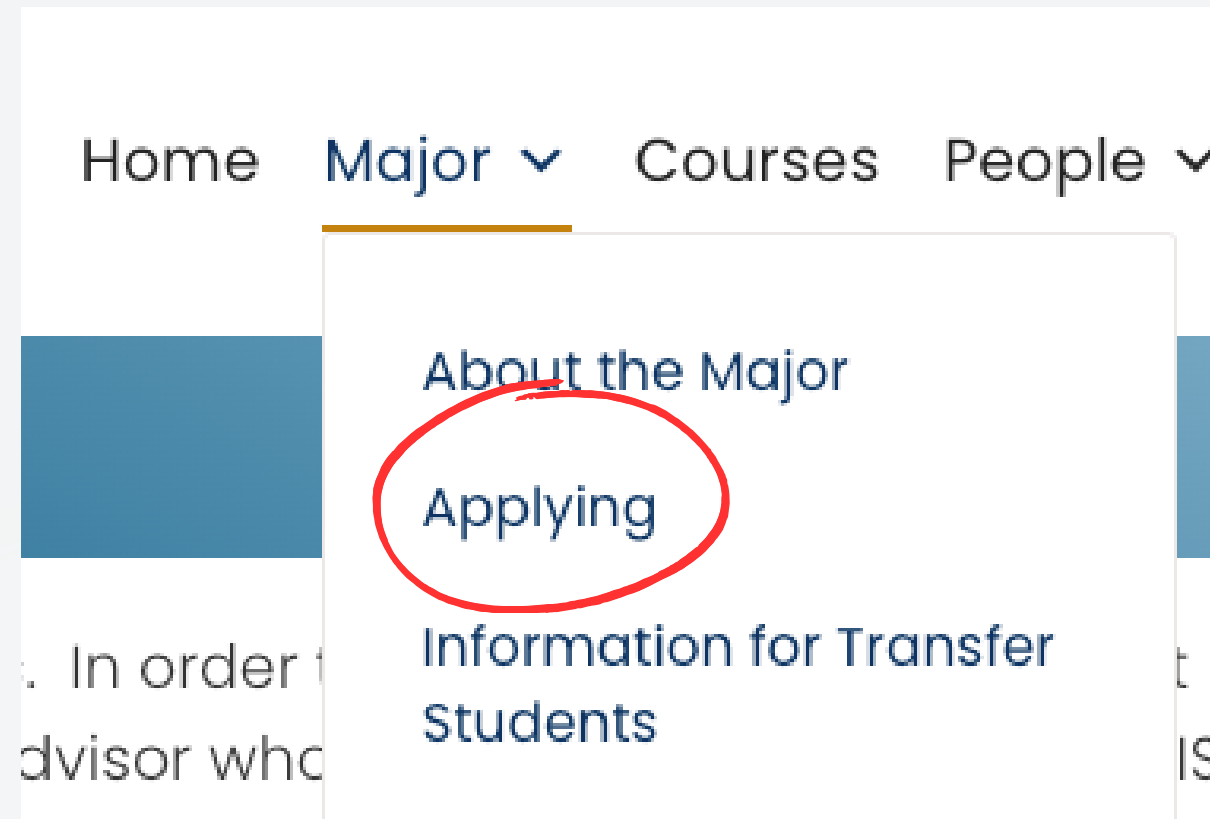
Submit completed application
to your faculty advisor via
email. Approved applications
are sent to Michelle for
declaration and APR updates.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Admission to the ISF major is **non-competitive**. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and should be submitted by the last day of classes of any given semester.



ISF MAJOR APPLICATION



Berkeley Interdisciplinary Studies Field

Home Major Courses People Re

Applying

Admission to the ISF Major is not automatic. In order to be considered, the student must first contact the Student Academic Advisor who will direct the student to an ISF faculty adviser. The **ISF Application** also found below, allows the student to develop in 750 words her/his Research Program. Applications to the major must be submitted to an ISF faculty adviser in person or via email. The applications are then reviewed by the ISF faculty. Students should expect a two week turnaround time on application processing.

ISF MAJOR APPLICATION

ADVISING SERVICES

The Undergrad Major Advisor/UMA (Michelle) and ISF faculty work together to advise on the major- see examples below of who to go to for which reasons.

General information about the ISF major, eligibility to apply, review the application process and major requirements, and check your progress in the major towards graduation

UMA

Development of your Research Field and senior thesis, Course of Study proposal and changes to this; academic, career, and graduate school goals

**FACULTY
ADVISING**





FALL 2024 ISF COURSES

(AND RECOMMENDATIONS*)



- 🔍 ISF 100A: Introduction to Social Theory and Cultural Analysis**
- 🔍 ISF 100C: Language and Identity*
- 🔍 ISF 100F: Theorizing Modern Capitalism: Controversies and Interpretations*
- 🔍 ISF C100G: Introduction to Science, Technology, and Society*
- 🔍 ISF 189: Interdisciplinary Research Methods
- 🔍 ISF 190: Senior Thesis

THANK YOU!

Michelle Herrera– Undergrad
Major Advisor/Student
Academic Advisor

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