



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE

INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PLAN FOR CONCENTRATION

In Gallatin, every student develops his or her own program of study, and the central focus of this program is the concentration. All students are required to write a brief, reflective essay of two to three pages about their intellectual development and their plans for designing the concentration. The essay—the Intellectual Autobiography and Plan for Concentration—is written with the help of the adviser, and students are further encouraged to consult with at least one other faculty member, who might also help guide students in mapping out their concentration.

The essay must be approved by the adviser and submitted sometime between the completion of 32 and 80 credits, that is, by the middle of the junior year at the latest. This requirement applies to students who entered Gallatin during or after the Fall 2003 term. Transfer students who enter with 72 credits must write their essay before they complete their first term in Gallatin.

THE INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PLAN FOR CONCENTRATION

THE CONCENTRATION

For Gallatin undergraduate students, a concentration is a set of learning experiences—courses, independent studies, internships, and private lessons—connected by a common organizing idea. Designed by the student in consultation with the adviser, the concentration may take a variety of forms: it may focus on traditional disciplines, historical periods, areas of the world, specific concepts or problems, methods of inquiry, professional interests, personal experiences or a combination thereof. On the back cover is a list of possible organizing devices. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but are offered to give students an idea of the many possible ways they can define and create their concentrations.

The Gallatin concentration is not simply a substitute for a traditional undergraduate major as defined by a faculty. Rather, each Gallatin student, with the consultation and approval of the academic adviser, constructs his or her own individualized concentration. Students have a great deal of freedom in constructing their concentrations and can combine disciplines and classes in the way they think best suits their interests and their educational goals. There is no minimum credit requirement for the concentration, but it usually constitutes anywhere from a quarter to a third or more of the student's undergraduate program (about 32 to 48 credits). Work on the concentration may begin slowly in the first and second years, but often occupies half or more of the studies in the junior and senior years. In any event, there is plenty of room for electives and experimentation.

INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PLAN FOR CONCENTRATION (IAPC)

All students are required to write a 2-3 page essay called the Intellectual Autobiography and Plan for Concentration in which they reflect on their education. In constructing the IAPC essay, students describe their educational experiences, the central idea(s) of the concentration and the coursework relevant to their concentration. This essay should be seen as a tool or guide—a way for students to reflect on how they learn as individuals, and to consider what they find academically interesting and challenging.

In writing the essay, students may want to begin by reflecting on their educational journey and exploring some of the following questions:

Why did you choose Gallatin? What were your educational goals? Have those goals changed? Why and how?

What educational experiences and courses (internships, seminars, independent studies, workshops, private lessons) have been influential to you? What was particularly interesting and why? What ideas have evolved from your educational experience so far?

Using these questions as a starting point, students can then turn their attention to the plan for their concentration.

What idea, period, subject, theme, concept, discipline is of particular interest to you? Is there a central idea or theme around which your concentration may be organized?

What kinds of study will you pursue? What types of courses (internships, seminars, independent studies, workshops, private lessons) will you take to construct the concentration and in what sequence might these classes be taken?

What is the meaning of such a course of study? What connections does this course of study have to other work and educational experiences, and what is its relevance to your future plans for graduate study or career?

For most students, these questions are similar to those they answer when they complete the Gallatin Plan of Study form. The Intellectual Autobiography and Plan for Concentration becomes the opportunity to integrate these ideas and to help students to seek out the ways that their courses converge and coalesce into a unique, individualized course of study.

THE INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PLAN FOR CONCENTRATION

TIMETABLE FOR WRITING THE ESSAY

All students who enter Gallatin during or after Fall 2003 are required to submit the Intellectual Autobiography and Plan for Concentration. The essay should be submitted no later than the middle of the junior year (i.e., before completing 80 credits). The timing and pacing for writing the essay, however, will vary as students move toward that goal at different rates and through different strategies. Some students may want to submit the essay earlier, but they should complete at least 32 credits before doing so.

First-year Students: Most first-year students are exploring different subjects and may not have a clear idea of their concentration—and that is fine. Students choose courses and learning opportunities with the guidance of their advisers, exploring interests and goals, identifying their learning styles and strengths, and taking courses in a variety of departments and schools.

Sophomores and Juniors: During their second year, students begin pursuing their concentration. They meet regularly with their advisers to discuss options, formulate questions, choose appropriate methods, and discover resources. Sometime between the completion of 32 and 80 credits—that is, between the beginning of the sophomore year and the middle of the junior year—students write the "Intellectual Autobiography and Plan for Concentration."

Seniors: The topic for the senior colloquium often grows out of the student's concentration. In the colloquium rationale, students may write about their concentration and how it has led them to their colloquium topic. In the colloquium itself, students have an opportunity to reflect on their educational experiences and to talk about their concentration and how it relates (or perhaps doesn't) to the topic of the colloquium.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

When students complete the 32nd credit, they will be automatically registered in the zero-credit IAPC course (IAPCOOOOOO1). The grade for this course will be recorded as an "I" (Incomplete) until the student has satisfied the requirement, at which time a grade of "P" will be posted. (The grade of "I" will not have any effect on financial aid, scholarships, grade point average, eligibility for the Dean's List or Latin Honors, or satisfactory progress requirements.)

The student's adviser is responsible for approving the IAPC essay, and thus it is particularly important that students and advisers work closely together on this document. Once the essay is completed, the student needs to fill out the Intellectual Autobiography and Plan for Concentration form and submit it with the essay to the adviser for approval. After the adviser has noted his or her approval on the IAPC form the student should then bring both of these documents to the Gallatin Office of Advising, located on the 5th Floor of 719 Broadway, which will keep a copy in the student's file. The grade of "P" will be recorded with the Registrar signifying that the student has fulfilled the requirement. Students who do not fulfill this requirement before the completion of the 80th credit will have a restriction (called a Dean's Hold) placed on their registration. This restriction will prohibit students from registering or making schedule changes (such as dropping or adding courses) until the IAPC is approved by the adviser and submitted.

CHANGES IN THE PLAN FOR CONCENTRATION

The plan for the concentration is an evolving, working document. Consequently, the essay is not expected to be exhaustive or binding; rather it is a way for students to make sense of and guide their college studies. After the essay is approved, students may make changes as they progress toward the degree: they should discuss these changes with their advisers. The substance of the plan may shift somewhat as the problems become clearer or the student's interests become more focused or evolve slightly.

If students' interests change significantly (from costume history to artificial intelligence, for example), the adviser can ask for a revision of the essay. If that happens, students need to consider if they have sufficient time left in the program to be able to complete the new plan.

THE INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND PLAN FOR CONCENTRATION

POSSIBLE ORGANIZING DEVICES

These examples are intended to give students an idea of the many possible ways they can define and create their concentrations (this list, however, is not exhaustive).

Theme: One device for building a concentration is to explore an interesting concept, phenomenon or problem like “order and chaos,” “passion and reason,” or “democracy.” The theme can be broadly construed, as, for example, race, gender, sexual identity, or class, and can be applied to a number of different historical periods or areas of the world. It can also be investigated comparatively and studied from a variety of disciplinary perspectives such as politics, philosophy, literature, or religion. *Other examples:* Gandhi, nonviolence, and social change; Discovery and representations of the “New World”

Area: This concentration focuses on a part of the world such as Southeast Asia or Latin America. The concentration may be concerned with a particular time period in that area or a comparative view of the area across historical epochs. As in concentrations based on a time period, students need to consider how the area is defined, historically, geopolitically, and culturally, as well as examine processes and developments in this part of the world. *Other examples:* Urban societies in Latin America; News Media in the Middle East

Period: A concentration might explore a period of history such as the ancient world, the Middle Ages, or the Ming Dynasty. The focus might be on one nation or continent such as pre-Columbian South America, or events and processes across those boundaries as, for example, in a consideration of the 15th century in Europe, Asia and Africa. Both the period and area concentrations can be combined with the concept (theme) device as in “modernization in Africa and Latin America.” *Other examples:* Tradition and Revolution in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; The Industrial Revolution in England and America

Method: A major analytic method, a theoretical framework, may be used as a way of organizing a concentration. A concentration using this device might study Marxist theory, feminist theory, disability theory, structuralism, or post-structuralism and apply such a system of analysis to art, culture, social change, etc. *Other examples:* Foucault and the Structuralist movement; Gender and race in feminist theory; Praxis: The challenge of making political practice from social history

Arts and Performance: A concentration in performance may involve pursuing a combination of critical and historical studies about an art form and practice in that form. Examples

might include dance, dance history and criticism; dramatic literature and acting; writing; the visual arts; music. *Other examples:* Mime and the aesthetics of silence; Art as culture and political change; Minstrelsy and the performance of racial identity

Profession: Organizing a concentration like this allows students, through a range of cross-disciplinary studies and experiences, to prepare for a profession not represented by one of the departments of NYU, such as cultural policy, environmental activism, or political consulting. Students may also use this concentration to prepare for such areas as pre-law and pre-medicine, writing and communications. *Other examples:* Labor organizer ; Arts magazine publisher

Multidisciplinary Inquiry: This kind of concentration is not simply a double major, which can often be an arbitrary and disconnected pair of disciplines. Rather a concentration of this kind requires that students consider the common, integrated threads that may run through two perhaps seemingly unrelated disciplines such as math and dance. Here the connecting thread may be the idea of patterns or structures. In a multidisciplinary concentration, students pursue a theme, concept, or problem which unites the two disciplines. *Other examples:* History and literature; Politics and the arts

Interdisciplinary Study of a Discipline: Students may choose to study a single discipline such as studio arts, comparative literature, writing, or philosophy. Students can turn this into an interdisciplinary study by looking at a subject from, for example, an historical perspective. In this type of concentration, students may interrogate a discipline by asking questions which undermine disciplinary boundaries or which demonstrate the relevance of other discourses and disciplines. For example, students who are interested in studying Latin American literature can inform that study with courses in Latin American gender and culture, politics, and history. For studio arts, students may want to study art history, cultural history, and gender issues as a way informing a focus in painting, for example. *Other examples:* History; Literature

Event or Person: A concentration may focus on an event like the Vietnam War or a person like Jesus or Charles Darwin. In this case, it is important to approach the study from an historical perspective and from more than one discipline in order to gain a greater understanding of the person or event. A study of Darwin, for example, could lead to a larger conceptual issue of social Darwinism and its contemporary effects. *Other examples:* The French Revolution; Michelangelo