

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSING A SELF-DESIGNED MAJOR

1. To qualify for a self-designed major, you must have a minimum GPA of 2.5.
2. Proposals for self-designed majors should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs by April 1st of the sophomore year and will be considered on a case by case basis. Proposals submitted after that deadline normally will be considered only if you have already declared a departmental major. If this is the case, you should submit your plan for the departmental major at the same time. Proposals from juniors will be considered only under exceptional circumstances; proposals from seniors will not be accepted. A sample proposal is attached.
3. Self-designed majors must be interdisciplinary in nature: specifically, such majors should have more than one course in each of at least three departments. It is expected that proposed self-designed programs will: 1. Be substantially different from but no less rigorous than existing majors; and 2. Reflect an emphasis consistent in breadth and focus with a liberal arts curriculum. Typically, self-designed majors will require more courses than traditional majors, and most of these courses will be upper level.
4. Before submitting an application, you should discuss your proposal with a faculty member who has an academic interest in your proposal. He or she should sign your proposal, indicating approval of the program and a willingness to serve as your self-designed major advisor. This individual will also be asked to certify to the Registrar that you have met the requirements for your self-designed major.
5. Applications must include the following information:
  - a. Title of the major. This should be concise but descriptive.
  - b. Your name, local address, mailbox number, and phone number.
  - c. Statement of purpose. Describe your reasons for the proposed major including your short-term and long-term goals. Also indicate why a regular departmental or interdepartmental major is not appropriate for you.
  - d. List of the courses you intend to include in the major and a rationale for each course you include. Most self-designed majors require at least 10 courses, the majority of which are numbered 250 or above. Indicate completed courses with an asterisk (\*) and courses to be completed with two asterisks (\*\*).
  - e. Description of the required capstone course. This could be a senior seminar, an independent study, a directed reading, or an apprenticeship.
  - f. Signature of the chairpersons of departments in which you expect to take three or more courses for your major. All proposals must provide space for these signatures which indicate only an awareness of your intent to take courses in that department.
6. One copy of your signed application should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs (University Hall-107). The proposal will be reviewed by a sub-committee of the Academic Policy Committee of the Faculty, and you may be asked to modify the proposal. If the proposal is approved, copies will be sent to you, the Registrar for your file, your academic advisor, and your self-designed major advisor. The Registrar will then list your major as Interdisciplinary, and the exact title will be listed as a clarifying note on your transcript.
7. Courses taken for your self-designed major may not be taken credit/no entry.
8. Requests to alter an approved program must be endorsed by APC. In this case, you must submit a written request, including the proposed changes and a rationale, to the Office of Academic Affairs.

## **SAMPLE PROPOSAL**

### **"Social Ecology: A Psychological Perspective"**

This course of study is designed to provide a thorough analysis of the interaction between social and environmental systems, as well as their impact on our mental and physical health throughout the various stages of life. I plan on continuing my education, after graduation from Ohio Wesleyan, in a master's program in Social Ecology.

The primary reason I have chosen to design my own major is that the field of Social Ecology encompasses knowledge of and research in sociological, ecological and psychological areas. More specifically, according to the description of the graduate program in Social Ecology at the University of California at Irvine, the field encompasses such diverse topics as contemporary problems in the social and physical environment, environmental stress, psychosocial aspects of physical and emotional health, atypical child development, and economic change and its effect on behavioral disorders. Although I would gain a vast amount of knowledge from continuing as a psychology major, I believe the course of study I have designed would be extremely helpful in preparing me for graduate study in Social Ecology and in ensuring my admittance to the graduate program of my choice. I have designed this program with the help of the Department of Psychology. Thank you for considering my request to create my own course of study.

The following is the list of courses I propose to complete towards this major, as well as an explanation as to their relevance to this course of study:

#### **BOMI 233 - Ecology and the Future of Man \*\***

This course provides information on the response of living organisms to environmental change, including climate change, biological effects of acid rain, and nutrient cycling.

#### **GEOG 110 - Cultural Geography \*\***

This course broadly examines the development of cultural regions (urban and agricultural), as well as humankind's impact on the natural environment. Human population growth, change and its environmental impact are also examined.

#### **GEOG 347 - Environmental Alteration \*\***

This course explores the human role in changing the face of the earth from Neolithic to contemporary times, emphasizing the role of technology and the impacts of industrial society on the earth.

#### **PSYCH 310 - Research Methods in Psychology\*\***

Empirical research which teaches students the methods and apparatus used in psychological investigation. This course is a requirement to gain entry into most graduate school programs that I am interested in. This course will help me in my study of social, environmental and psychological data.

#### **PSYC 321 - Personality and Assessment \***

An overview of the major theories and principles of personality and human adjustment is studied. This includes an extensive look at the social, psychological and biological development and determinants of behavior.

#### **PSYC 322 - Abnormal Behavior \***

The major forms of abnormal behavior are discussed, with an emphasis on their social, mental and biological causes and the effects of these disorders on our society.

#### **PSYC 323 - Community Psychology \*\***

The interaction of the community in the prevention of mental disorders. Environmental change and social support intervention in the prevention and treatment of mental disorders is also discussed.

**PSYC 333 - Child Psychology \*\***

This course examines the psychological and physiological development of the child to 12 years of age. The effects of the parents, school, and community on emotional, social and intellectual aspects of behavior is examined.

**PSYC 491 - Directed Readings \*\***

An extensive study of environmental illness, with a focus on its causes, symptoms, and psychological and physical effects.

**SOAN 347 - Health and Illness \*\***

An examination of the social and social-psychological factors associated with illness and health care. A look at the causes of illness that goes beyond the "germ theory." Society's response to illness is also explored.

**SOAN 367 - Human Ecology \*\***

A study of the way in which human societies from around the world interact with their environments. There is a focus on the way environmental, technological and demographic factors affect cultures, as well as the evolution of modern culture and societies and the consequences for change in human ways of life.

**SOAN 491 - Readings in Sociology and Anthropology \*\***

Capstone Course - An extensive reading course focusing on the mental and physical risks associated with living in an urban environment. Particular attention will be given to the effects of urban environments on all aspects of child development.

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor (Academic)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor (Self-Designed Major)

Signature indicates awareness of the student's intent to take courses in the department.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Psychology Department Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sociology Department Chairperson

**Note:** Single asterisks (\*) indicate completion of a course;  
Double asterisks (\*\*) indicate course still remains to be completed.