

# INTERDISCIPLINARY LIBERAL ARTS



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

## NEWS | FACULTY | STUDENT STORIES

### DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

I was sitting in my new office the other morning--the I-LA offices were moved this past summer to the 3rd floor of Clark B-wing East--and I had my office window open. It was a sunny day around mid-afternoon, and what struck me most was the sound of students down below going about their business of being on campus, going to classes in person, and--quite telling in the sound of the voices--great pleasure of being back on campus in person. It was--to my way of thinking--a very pleasant sound. A sound filled with a sense of community, a sense of purpose being here, a sense of excitement at being here, and, mostly, the joy of being around friends and classmates. Yes, a very welcome sound that has been missing on campus since the pandemic hit us in the spring of 2020.



I spent the good part of this summer--and the previous school year--2021-22--working on finalizing what we see as an important curricular development. A new Open Education textbook that looks at interdisciplinarity from a perspective and framework that works for how we teach interdisciplinarity in our junior and senior seminar courses. Our aim is to test it this spring and then adopt it for both the Junior and Senior seminar courses in fall 2023. One plus to this development is a cost-savings to all of you. Part of the textbook development funding came from a grant from the Colorado OER Council that supports efforts to transition courses from using commercial course materials to using Open Education Resources, which are free to not only those of you in our major but to students worldwide.

Otherwise--as I do every summer--I spent a great deal of time in my other home: Dublin, Ireland. Besides working on several writing projects, I continued an ongoing (3 years & running) project of photographing Dublin from a different perspective than the one those over here usually get. It's a project of love for a favorite city of mine. Here are a couple of photographs from the project. The first is a shot of Dublin Bay taken one afternoon from Bullock Harbour in Dalkey--a south-side seaside community of Dublin. The second is taken at Salthill-Monkstown DART station one evening as I was waiting for a northbound train into the city centre.



### COMMENTS FROM JESSIE, ASC

Hello to our magnificent majors: I am Jessie Stewart, your advisor. My goals are always to help you navigate this university system, connect you with resources to have a well-rounded experience, and assist you in graduating in a timely manner. With those objectives in mind, I want to give more information about the benefits of summer school. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions:

#### Does summer school offer the classes I need to graduate?

Most likely YES. This major allows students to choose a variety of classes in many different departments at the lower and upper division levels. There are hundreds of classes offered each summer. And, we guarantee that our major core courses (SPCM 200, LB 392, LB 492 and LB 490) are offered each summer.

#### Will I be in school all summer long or are there different sessions? I still NEED a summer break!

There are many options to balance your time. Summer at CSU offers 4 week, 8 week and 12 week classes. There are also some weekend classes too. In addition, the College of Liberal Arts is offering Mountain Campus excursions for upper division credits that are just 2 weeks long.

#### What if I am not living in Fort Collins or working a lot over the summer?

Lots of classes are offered online in synchronous and asynchronous forms. You can search classes by session time if you know you will be here part of the summer, or you can search classes and filter by online delivery.

#### Can I afford to take summer classes?

The Board of Governors has voted to discount online classes 30% for out of states students. There are also discounts in state students. You may use your financial aid and most scholarships in the summer if you remain full time (six credits) during summer session. Always connect with Student Financial Services if you are considering summer courses.

#### Can I count a job I have this summer as internship (LB 487) credits?

It is possible. And this course counts in the major. We would want to know what the position is and how many hours you are working to determine how many credits you can earn. For all internship information, please contact [Cindy.Murillo@colostate.edu](mailto:Cindy.Murillo@colostate.edu)

#### Are there Education Abroad coursework in summer to earn credits for my major or minor?

Yes, dozens. Some are three credits, many are six credits. I am more than happy to talk about options that would be right for you, but most often History, English, Communication Studies, Sociology, and Journalism departments offer summer study abroad programs.

#### Where can I get more information?

From me or <https://summer.colostate.edu/>

# INTERDISCIPLINARY LIBERAL ARTS



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



ABOUT INTERDISCIPLINARY LIBERAL ARTS

What is Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts?

The Liberal Arts are composed of disciplines such as the humanities, the arts, languages and literature, and social sciences. Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts is a program of study that combines these disciplines into one cohesive field. This major is highly customizable; students choose at least two disciplines but often more to study. By majoring in Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts, one learns to think critically. They gain knowledge of the limitations of each discipline, self awareness of their own biases, courage to challenge their worldview, and respect for those who have different beliefs and perspectives. In short, Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts majors are well-rounded, intellectually aware, and creative individuals.

At CSU, Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts majors have the unique opportunity to graduate in 3 years. If you are interested, please contact your advisor about Accelerated Programs or click the link for more information.

Why should I choose Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts?

Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts prepares students for a complex and competitive market. It provides students with several valuable skills:

- Critical-Thinking and Problem-Solving
- Researched, Fact-Based Persuasion
- Communication Proficiency
- Media and Digital Information Competency
- Collaborative Agency
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Integrative Thinking
- Humanistic and Cultural Understanding
- Interdisciplinary Awareness
- Creative Design

What does any of that mean? It means that you will have a lot of skills that are highly sought after in the job market. You are highly adaptable and can apply what you know to almost any situation. You know how to communicate with those that may think differently than you. You can see a problem from more than one perspective which will likely illuminate a creative and effective solution that your peers may not be aware of.

TO JESSIE STEWART

Jessie Stewart has been an advisor for the I-LA major for many years. She has recently taken on a new role at CSU. The first time I--Jayden--walked into Jessie's office, I was lost and definitely overwhelmed. By the end of the meeting, Jessie had convinced me--with the power of kind words and a magical spreadsheet--that not only would I be okay, but I could truly succeed at CSU. Thank you Jessie, and good luck in the next chapter of your career!

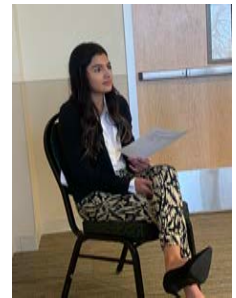
I-LA GRAPHIC



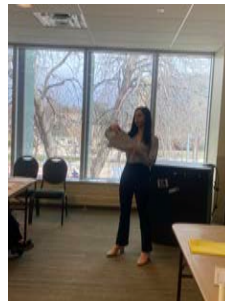
A MESSAGE FROM PROF ROBINSON

Mock Trial LB360

We are about to start registration for the fourth year of Mock Trial. This class is a great one if you are interested in trial work after law school. You will receive a criminal case problem on the first day of class. It will contact the charges, complaint, witness statements and all the evidence. The class has 36 students and in the second week you are divided into six teams of six. Your group will be assigned prosecution or defense and we will spend the semester learning each step in a trial. The last six weeks



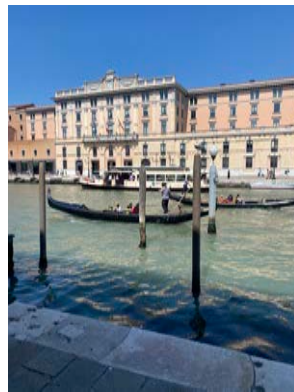
of class, you will put on a trial with your team against another team in a round robin style. This includes opening statements, closing arguments, direct and cross examinations, entering exhibits and making and responding to objections. We have local attorneys come to judge and you will receive great feedback. This is a must for anyone interested in law school and trial work. Feel free to contact me with any questions at [gina.robinson@colostate.edu](mailto:gina.robinson@colostate.edu).



**A WORD FROM PROF ROBINSON**

**Comparative Legal Studies in Italy Summer 2022 LB460A**

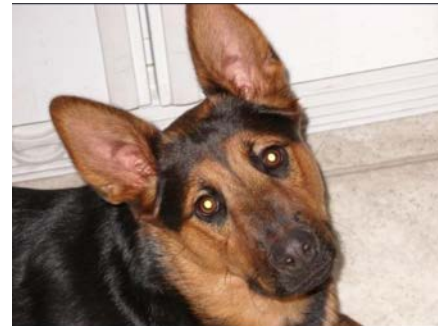
Last June I took 12 students to Italy for a study abroad class. We lived in apartments in Florence and then took two side trips to Venice and Rome. The trip is three weeks long and you get three hours of credit (it counts as an upper division course in the legal studies minor also). We had a great time! We learned about the Italian legal system specifically tort law, criminal and civil law, business law, Vatican law, and all about their court system. We were able to then compare their legal system to that in the United States. We also learned a bit of Italian, at least enough to order a cappuccino and pastry. We also had a lot of free time for gondola rides in Venice, visiting the Trevi fountain in Rome, winetasting in Chianti and a cooking class in Florence. We also ate our way through Italy and never missed a gelato shop.



If you are interested in joining us this summer, please get on the study abroad website and search my name or the class name and the trip will pop up. Our first deadline is December 1, 2022, so get your applications in. Feel free to contact me with any questions at [gina.robinson@colostate.edu](mailto:gina.robinson@colostate.edu).



**A WORD FROM DR. MURILLO**



I was never quite comfortable operating within the realm of absolutes, perhaps a clear indicator of my propensity toward interdisciplinary studies and research. And yet I was faced with a difficult situation recently where choice was not an option and a decision had to be made.

We lost our family dog Mena recently. She had been with us for sixteen years and about eight moves (three cross country) and she had the battle wounds to prove it, but she never let on. For me, she was my companion, my guide, and my best friend. I never really thought about the end of her life—I kind of figured she would just pass in her sleep and nature would take its course, allowing me to linger in that nebulous space where absolutes just get in the way and choices abound. Until they don't. For the first time, I realized the difference between choice and decision, two terms that I had often used interchangeably, but suddenly realized were so starkly different in presentation and effect.

Choice implies alternatives and assumes options and I had plenty of them over the years with my dog, from her diet, activities, and physical health to her veterinarian, where she sleeps, and even how many kisses she gets a night (of course endless amounts). There is a type of power and freedom in selection that gets a bit muddled when having to decide.

Decisions often present as either-or and imply a type of judgement or call that must be made—when we are out of choices. With Mena, we were out of choices. She could no longer get up and when she tried, she would fall back in pain. Any attempt to help her, led to the same results, so to continue to let her live this way would be no life. Decisions are driven by needs and values and imply a type of finality or determinism. In fact, the word “decision” comes from “cutting off,” and refers to the elimination of all alternatives. I was faced with a decision.

As I drove the fifty miles with Mena to the pet-care facility that would ease her into greener pastures, there was a type of peace and tranquility surrounding us. I was not burdened with a difficult choice. I was not lost in ambiguity. Rather, I was enjoying the presence of Mena, the last bit of time with her in this world. Instead of viewing this decision to end her life as a failure of my will or a disloyalty to her, I basked in the ambiance of certainty, not of “cutting off,” but of “letting go.”

R.I.P. Mena

**A WORD FROM PROF WERNSING**



This summer promised to be open and carefree. I had planned two different trips with my kids to see family, and I had a writing project to work on, but other than that, things were pretty loose. The kids didn't have many scheduled activities. Mostly, we spent the summer playing, swimming, hanging out with friends, and going to the library. This sounds idyllic, but it wasn't what you imagine.

There was the ongoing housework, the challenges of 3 kids trying to get along with each other, and the confusion of not having a schedule or specific deadlines. It turns out that, though we all had moments of fun and joy this summer, we were also all relieved to get back to the regularity of school and teaching, the daily rhythm of our individual work.

With words like "quiet quitting" and "labor shortage" being thrown around in the media, we are having a cultural moment of being anti-work. I can appreciate this cultural backlash. We should rightfully stand against systems which underpay and overwork the many to the benefit of the few. However, as I was reminded again this summer, work can also be life-giving. It can offer us meaning and structure. It can give us connection to other people and to something larger than ourselves.

Work in this sense, in the life-giving sense, doesn't have to be paid work. For me, in the past, it has been paid work in teaching and advising, but it has also been unpaid writing projects I've chosen to do, reading I've selected to broaden my mind and understanding of others' experiences, and volunteer work for organizations I care about. Work, in this sense, is part of how we show up in the world as our authentic selves.

Interdisciplinary Studies offers us the benefit of discernment. With the opportunity to try out so many different subjects and learn from so many different teachers, we understand more about what problems and issues are meaningful to us. Hopefully that translates into work (whether unpaid or paid) that we do in the world to help others and strengthen our communities.

I hope you all are experiencing classes that help you discern your passions and interests, classes that help you figure out your work and place in the world. And, as always, I'm grateful to be on this journey with you as one of the Interdisciplinary Studies instructors.

**ALPHA IOTA SIGMA**



Alpha Iota Sigma is an international honor society established for undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary studies students and affiliated with the professional organization, Association for Interdisciplinary Studies. We seek to encourage a community of interdisciplinarity, provide opportunities to interdisciplinary students, and recognize the achievements of hard-working academic performers.

Our mission at CSU is to connect academic coursework to the larger community through civic engagement projects, conferences, and local meetings that encourage honors students to be leaders in addressing the complex problems of contemporary society with the highest intellectual, ethical, and moral standards.

Membership enhances academic credentials through public recognition, including a certificate attesting to your induction, and graduation regalia such as honor cord, medal or pin. Honors students will have an opportunity to present at the annual AIS conference which hosts a panel of honor student work. You will also be able to connect with other honor students, forging a network from across the country.

For more information about joining our organization, please contact Dr. Cindy Murillo at [cmurillo@colostate.edu](mailto:cmurillo@colostate.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!!

**A WORD FROM I-LA COORDINATOR**

**STEPHANIE WAGNER, MSW**

Hello, my name is Stephanie Wagner and I am the administrative coordinator for Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts. You can find my office in Clark C138, the College of Liberal Arts, Dean's office. I have a bachelor's degree in Social Work and Psychology from the University of Kansas as well as a master's degree in Social Work and Geriatrics from Loyola University in Chicago. I have lived in Fort Collins for 8-years and love being part of the CSU. If you have any questions regarding Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts or even College of Liberal Arts, come visit me or email me at [Stephanie.A.Wagner@colostate.edu](mailto:Stephanie.A.Wagner@colostate.edu).



---

**HEARING FROM I-LA MAJORS & LEGAL STUDIES MINORS**


---



---

**REILLY MEYER, FOURTH YEAR**


---



Hi, my name is Reilly Meyer. I am a senior Interdisciplinary Studies major. Going into college, I didn't even know what Interdisciplinary Studies was. At the end of my sophomore year, I established myself as a communications major because I love speaking in front of others and also really enjoy talking with people. At the time, this major seemed perfect for me. Every semester when I was registering for classes, I found myself signing up for psychology classes any chance I got. Because of my interest in both subjects, my academic advisor introduced Interdisciplinary Studies to me, and I decided it would be the perfect major for me to be able to do both subjects equally. Not only did it work out great for my personal desires, but in my opinion, communications and psychology complement each other well and go hand in hand. I think that being able to understand how people think will make me a better communicator. Furthermore, I am a horticulture minor, and I think it's so cool that I am able to study 3 different topics in depth during my time in college.

Interdisciplinary studies is important to me because I've always thought that the world is not black and white. To me, "looking at the world as a whole" means looking at situations from many different lenses and perspectives. Although looking at things using one discipline can give you lots of information, using multiple disciplines allows new ideas that we may never have otherwise considered.

If I had to choose, I'd say my two favorite classes that I've taken with my major would be Advanced Public Speaking and Abnormal Psychology. I've taken a few public speaking classes, but the advanced version of the class really brought me out of my shell and brought my confidence in talking in front of people to a whole new level. Before this class, presenting in front of a group felt tense and very memorization based. Now, it feels more comfortable, conversational, and connected. Abnormal psychology also is high on my list of favorites because I really got to dive deep into learning about the major personality disorders. This class changed the way I view and appreciate mental health.

---

**STUDENT RESOURCES**


---

Are you feeling stressed? Are you struggling with time management or self care? Check out the [CSU Health Network](#)! The CSU Health Network has a variety of resources to support your mental health and well being. There are student workshops that can help you manage stress, navigate trauma, and explore ideas related to personal identities and even substance abuse. You can also find support groups and even get 1-on-1 counseling. This time of year can be tough on students. Make sure that you are getting the help you need in order to be successful!



**CSU HEALTH NETWORK**  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

---

**SYLVIA R. SZPONDER, THIRD YEAR**


---



Being positive like a positive popping proton is my motto in life. I have an upbeat, eccentric, and bubbly personality that I cherish. One of my many interests is kickboxing. I love the fact that it's a fun high intensity workout that makes me sweat profusely. The gym that I go to also plays very good workout music that compliments my workout. Besides my kickboxing hobby, other interests of mine include being outdoors, whether it be walking, biking, hiking, or swimming in the grand rivers of Colorado. I enjoy walking along nature trails, and I love touching the tall grasses and trees as I walk by, feeling their energy and hence being in the present moment. To add on, I also enjoy watching Dr. Who with my brothers. That magic police box sure is invitingly spacious.

My academic interests include physics, psychology, history, and English. I love to fathom at multi universes and time travel, along with duality and reminiscing the beautifully written stories of Jane Austen. I adore learning about ancient civilizations, especially the Ancient Egyptians. History makes me appreciate what humans have accomplished to this day and age.

I chose Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts as a major because it provides me with the most variety of classes I can take to expand my horizon. With my Interdisciplinary Studies major, I am able to get a well rounded education that I could not get with any other major, in my opinion. I love studying different disciplines and trying to find common ground with them all in order to solve a real complex problem. For example, for my research project, I am studying history, psychology, and sociology to find common ground in them to help understand narcissism in the 21st century. I am also grateful for the experience I have so far with Colorado State University including my amazing professors and peers.

After I graduate, I intend on pursuing a career in human resources. I believe that my degree will help me become a successful human resources director one day. I will face many hard problems in that career, such as racism. I can apply what I know of different disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology to find common ground in them and address racism in the workforce.

HEARING FROM I-LA MAJORS & LEGAL STUDIES MINORS

ELIZABETH HIGGS, THIRD YEAR

My name is Elizabeth Higgs, I'm currently a junior and I have been an interdisciplinary major with an english and legal studies minor for almost a year now. Some things about me—I've been a ceramics artist for 14 years, I'm originally from New Jersey, and I'm passionate about criminal justice reform. I am the Vice President of the CSU Pre Law club and I am also a part of the Entomology club—both of which are very important to me and constantly teach me new things. I hope to go to law school after college, and while law school is the focus, I want to have a diversified education so I can be properly prepared for the ever-changing workforce.



I have always had a variety of interests so being squished into one discipline has never been well-fitted for me. Thankfully, after having me for nearly 2 years, my undecided advisor knew my preferences well by the time I had to pick a major, and could tell that diving into one specialization was not something I wanted to do. So, he suggested interdisciplinary liberal arts. And I am so glad he did, I can now take the classes I want and have minors that suit my interests.

Last summer I landed my first internship and had the privilege of working for the New Jersey Economic Development Authority. At my internship, I was grateful for the variety of ways I had diversified my background to prepare me for the work I was doing, and I was even more grateful for the ways that the internship further expanded my knowledge and taught me about more areas of business. I learned about policy, implementation, teamwork, and excel (hard). As I get further into my degree, I have a multitude of different experiences and opportunities that foster my advancement as an interdisciplinary learner. One that I am extremely excited about is my plan to study abroad next semester in Florence, Italy. This once in a lifetime opportunity will be a huge learning experience for me and I look forward to completely immersing myself in their culture.

A QUOTE

*"When students can understand and make connections across a diverse array of knowledge and skills, they embark on a path to more rewarding lives and employment opportunities. Higher education can and must do a better job of leading the way out of disciplinary silos."*

- Issues.org

Disciplinary silos are a specific discipline's way of thinking. It includes their biases and definitions (which may differ from the definition used by another discipline). It often narrows or limits what that discipline can see or will see. It may also lead to misunderstandings across various disciplines.

By diversifying your knowledge, you are able to see the connections between various ways of thinking and organizing the world.

ELLIE BEAUCHAMP, SECOND YEAR



Hi! My name is Ellie Beauchamp, and I am a second-year here at CSU! I grew up in San Francisco, California where I found my adoration for the ocean, and I'm currently earning a minor in business! Some of my interests outside of school include running, swimming, hiking, exploring nature, and eating any combination of peanut butter and chocolate! I spend a lot of time playing sand volleyball, cooking, and traveling as well! I plan to graduate in 2024 and will then pursue a degree in chiropractic care! I am super passionate about the human body and what we can do to help it function and perform as efficiently and comfortably as possible! Watching people around me find relief from chronic headaches, fatigue, infertility, eczema, arthritis, and epilepsy from chiropractic care, I can confidently say that there's no other occupation that I would want to be a part of as much as this one! I chose I-LA as my major to get a more diverse background in knowledge of the disciplines to help me connect with my future patients and solve problems in a complex way that encompasses insights from multiple lenses and perspectives. I spent my elementary school years in a French immersion lycée in San Francisco, called Lycée Francais La Perouse. This experience lights me up with joy as I reminisce on the poetry, sculptures, music lessons, and art I explored at this French school. These languages allowed me to travel to France, Switzerland, and Canada and observe each remarkable culture with an open heart. Without a language barrier I was able to interact with the most extraordinary people with completely unique ideas, experiences, and values to me. This demonstrated the importance of integrating more than one perspective into one's mindset, which the interdisciplinary studies major offers. From this moment I knew I wanted my bachelor's in something that has a variety of electives to play to my aptitudes and interests! Additionally, this major also allows me to get in all of my pre-requisites for chiropractic school while still graduating a year early! I am so thankful for such an inclusive and diverse community that allows students to dip our toes into whatever courses and content sparks our interests and passions to help us explore our own aptitudes and bring those gifts and goals into the world!

HEARING FROM I-LA MAJORS & LEGAL STUDIES MINORS

HANNAH STOKES, THIRD YEAR



My journey to Interdisciplinary Affairs has been a long one! I thought that perhaps college wasn't for me, so I made the choice out of high school to work instead, spending the six years working in natural resource management, mostly doing trail work, firefighting, landscaping, traveling, skiing, adventuring, and more! While the gratification of hard work and fulfilling a dream of spending most of my nights under the stars meant a lot, there came a point in which I was dissatisfied with my intellectual journey. These jobs pushed my body and my physical constraints, but I grew weary of not putting my brain to work. I had a vague idea that I wanted to study design, or perhaps natural resource management, or politics (another lifelong interest), but I could not come up with a major that would cover all of these in a satisfying way. These varied interests culminated in a desire to learn about a lot of different disciplines which led me to Interdisciplinary Affairs with a minor in Environmental Policy. The classes I've been able to take at CSU have been extremely varied in nature: some history, some science, lots of English, ethnic studies, political science, and more. The option to create your schedule on what interests you and what you feel will further pursue your own intellectual journey is exactly what feels empowering about this program. I have been able to have time to pursue my interests and goals without being stuck in a certain discipline. The world needs more people to be able to understand different people, with different backgrounds, in order to think about complex issues in our modern world. The value presented to me through Interdisciplinary Affairs is to be a kind, empathetic, thoughtful human. A way to accomplish this is through the ability to learn about different disciplines.



GREETINGS FROM THE I-LA NEWS-LETTER SENIOR INTERN

I am a third year Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts major and Spanish minor. I had a difficult time choosing a field of study when I first came to CSU. I have a lot of diverse interests and couldn't decide which one to focus on. My first year, I enrolled as an Engineering major but quickly decided that wasn't a good fit for me. I then spent a semester in Exploratory Studies and tried a little bit of everything including Nutrition and Philosophy. One class that really made an impression on me was LB173: Encountering the Global taught by Cindy Murillo. If you haven't taken this class, I highly recommend it. I absolutely loved the way the class combined literature, history, and anthropology. Through Cindy, and that class, I was introduced to the Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts major.

Since then, I've learned a lot about what it means to have an interdisciplinary approach to research and how I can apply that to my own life. I tend to see interdisciplinary studies as a bit of a puzzle. You are given all the pieces, or disciplinary approaches, and you have to figure out how they all fit together in order to see the full picture. I appreciate how this major really shows that there is no one correct way to think. It really fosters creativity and allows me to push the boundaries of what I've been taught in the past.



INTERDISCIPLINARY LIBERAL ARTS COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

