

INDIVIDUALIZED MAJOR PROGRAM

The Individualized Major Program was founded in 1974. Since then, more than 2200 students have graduated with individualized majors.



What is an Individualized Major?

An individualized major (IMJR) is a self-designed, interdisciplinary major that allows you to create a program of study to fit your own specific interests.

- An IMJR consists of at least 36 credits of courses at the 2000-level or higher, drawn from two or more departments.
- IMJRs are offered by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS) and the College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources (CAHNR).
- As long as 18 credits are drawn from courses in the degree-granting college, relevant courses may be taken in other schools and colleges of the University.
- You may combine an individualized major with a second major or additional degree.

Health and Wellness through Visual Arts **merges** courses in **psychology** and Human Development and Family Studies with **photography** courses in Fine Arts. I intend to use art therapy to **help** patients cope with their **illnesses** through creativity and **expression**.

- Melissa Aldieri ('18), Health and Wellness through Visual Arts

Recent Major Titles

Health:

- Global Health
- Community Health and Wellness
- Healthcare and Aging
- Food, Culture, and Health
- Exercise Physiology and Nutrition
- Science, Medicine, and Ethics

International Studies:

- Global Studies
- East Asian Studies
- Middle East Studies

Information Technology:

- Data Science
- Information Systems and Analytics
- Human-Computer Interaction

Social Sciences:

- Poverty and Social Inequality
- Organizations, Interactions, and Leadership
- Economic Policy and Law
- Crime, Law, and Justice
- Fashion, Gender, and Culture

Arts and Humanities:

- Visual Media and Culture
- Sustainable Urban Design
- Religious Thought
- Health and Wellness through Visual Arts
- Film and Global Activism

Natural Sciences:

- Animal Management and Care
- Atmospheric Science
- Molecular Genetics
- Behavioral Neuroscience
- Plant Biotechnology

Plus many more!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When do I declare an individualized major?

You can meet with an individualized major advisor to discuss your plans as early as your first semester. The Individualized Major Program requires an application and you can apply once you have completed 30 credits or have third semester status. You must apply before you register for your last 30 credits (at least a year before your planned graduation).

How do I declare an individualized major?

IISP staff and faculty advisors will help you prepare a plan of study and statement of purpose. You then present your endorsed proposal to the IMJR Advisory and Admissions Committee for approval.

What is acceptance based on?

Acceptance is based on your academic record, a coherent plan of study, a well-written statement of purpose, and an effective presentation to the Committee.

What are the program's requirements?

To be considered for an individualized major in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), you will need a GPA of 2.0 or higher. For the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR), you will need a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

To graduate with an individualized major from either college, you will need a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, and a GPA of 2.5 or higher in the courses that comprise your major.

Can I incorporate research, study abroad, or an internship into my individualized major?

Yes, we strongly recommend that you include an internship, field experience, research, and/or study abroad in your plan of study. These types of learning experiences are usually extremely rewarding on many levels: academic, professional, and personal.

What will my diploma say?

It will say that you earned a B.A. or a B.S. from your college and that you completed an Individualized Major. The title of your IMJR will appear on your diploma and transcript, in the format "Individualized: Title of Major."

Will I be employable with an individualized major?

Yes! Employers like graduates who have the initiative, motivation, and creativity to join our program. See the back of this flyer for a list of individualized majors' first jobs and the graduate schools to which they were admitted.

Abroad in Belgium

By Simone Fournier ('20)
IMJR: Healthcare and Aging

This past January I traveled to Ghent, Belgium, for a two-week interdisciplinary program held at Artevelde University College. The program educated students on the nuances of end of life and palliative care through active discussions, site visits, volunteering with patients, and presentations from experts. We compared our nations' health policies and discussed the philosophical aspects of end of life care. One of the most powerful experiences of this program was listening to a panel of healthcare professionals debate the implications of euthanasia, which is legal in Belgium.



My major, Healthcare and Aging, encompasses a wide range of courses on aging, healthcare systems, policy, social determinants of health, and healthcare justice. Although I had learned about international healthcare systems and policies in my courses, in this program I was able to experience another country's healthcare system and approaches to end of life care firsthand. This fostered my critical examination of the U.S. healthcare system and emphasized its differing approaches for handling medical issues. I left Belgium with a more global perspective on healthcare, and a strong desire to improve healthcare policy here in the U.S. Most importantly however, I relish the friendships I formed with my peers and the desire to pursue some form of postgraduate education abroad that came from this experience.

- More than 30% of IMJRs study abroad
- More than 50% of IMJRs complete internships
- More than 25% of IMJRs graduate with honors

UNIV 2600: Gateway to the Major

Every semester we offer UNIV 2600 Individualized Study across Academic Disciplines. It is a one-credit course designed to help you:

- Explore the different ways in which knowledge can be organized such as the traditional categories of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities
- Analyze the key features of the disciplines relevant to your major
- Develop a plan of study and statement of purpose
- Formulate strategies for integrating knowledge across disciplines through case studies of critical social issues

Enrolling in UNIV 2600 is a key step to becoming an individualized major. We highly recommend taking the course!

Capstone Experience

All individualized majors are expected to fulfill the capstone requirement, which gives you the chance to integrate the insights that you have acquired during the course of your studies. Many students take UNIV 4600W Capstone Course. Others, including Honors students, work one-on-one with faculty as they write theses on major-related topics. Occasionally a student may take a graduate-level seminar, or other advanced course, to fulfill this requirement.

The central element of the Capstone course is a research essay on a topic that is relevant to your major and allows you to deepen your interdisciplinary research and writing skills. In addition to the essay, you will reflect on the knowledge and experience you gained as an individualized major and consider how these can be applied to graduate studies or future employment.

Recent Capstone Essays:

- American Photographic Depictions of the Depression and WWII
- Protracted Exile: Community Tensions and Syrian Refugees in Jordan
- Healthcare Access for Undocumented Immigrants in the United States
- Deforestation, Palm Oil, and Health
- The Opioid Epidemic

Capstone: Soccer Outcomes

By Jack Schooley ('20)
IMJR: Data Science

The most important question of any soccer match is who will win? Draws occur rather frequently in soccer, so I was looking at a difficult three-outcome problem. I found a Kaggle dataset with detailed statistics from the English Premier League and created a model that would predict the outcome of each league game.



The natural next step was to use my model to make bets. So, I developed a comprehensive betting strategy using my model, in which I optimized for which outcomes to bet on and how much money to wager for each bet. My work culminated in a real-time betting experiment, in which I used my model and betting strategy to make actual bets over a four-month period using an initial balance of \$200. I was relatively successful in this regard; after being in the red for the majority of the time, a strong showing in the last weekend of the experiment put the final balance at \$223.40 - a slight profit. The sample size of 79 bets is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions, but I learned a lot doing this thesis.

Recent Thesis Titles

- Disability as a Global Health Issue: How Visual Storytelling Can Help Shift Narratives
- Watching Grass Grow: How Soil Moisture Affects Vesicular-Arbuscular Mycorrhizae and Growth in Little Bluestem
- Gendered Negotiation and Its Influence on the Gender Pay Gap
- The Effect of Different Rhythmic Frequencies on Negative Mean Asynchrony

LIFE AFTER UCONN

Graduate Programs

Some of our recent graduates have gone directly into graduate programs in:

- Law, New York University
- Medicine, UConn
- Pharmacology, Yale University
- Information Management and Systems, University of California Berkeley
- Public Health, Columbia University
- Food & Agricultural Economics, Cornell University
- Sport Business, Temple University
- Food Studies, New York University
- Public Health, Johns Hopkins University
- Neuroscience, University of Massachusetts

The individualized **major** prepared me for graduate school. Doing laboratory **research**, writing a thesis, and presenting my **work** helped me to **focus** on the scientific questions that I will explore during my **career**.

- Beata Kaminska-Kordowska ('14), *Developmental Neuropsychology*

First Jobs

Some of our recent graduates' first jobs have been:

- Behavioral Therapist, RCS Learning Center
- IT Business Analyst, World Fuel Services
- Assistant Buyer, Macy's, Inc.
- Data Engineering, The Travelers
- Research Fellowship, Marcus Autism Center
- Fellow, Newman's Own Foundation
- Client Success Specialist, Indeed.com
- Human Resources Coordinator, Stanley Black & Decker
- UX Designer, ESPN

Public Health Policy

By Aaron Plotke ('16)

IMJR: Health Policy

My individualized major, Health Policy, explored the connection between public policy and human health, relying on disciplines such as economics, human rights, and psychology. It taught me to consider many different perspectives — an important skill that is especially relevant today.



I am now a Masters student at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, which also emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach. My department, Sociomedical Sciences, weaves together history, ethics, economics, and politics. One of my favorite courses, on the ethics of public health, involved discussions about the political and ethical dimensions of public health policy, such as taxing sugar-sweetened beverages or mandating helmets for motorcyclists.

A highlight of my Columbia experience has been participating in the Health Justice Advocacy Clinic. My team of students worked with advocates in Ohio to pass local ordinances to strengthen pre-rental risk assessment requirements for private homes and apartments. In addition, we sought to pass national legislation, The Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act, that would close loopholes in HUD's inspection requirements for their public housing programs. We are proud that our bill has been introduced in both the US Senate and House of Representatives!

Non-Discrimination Policy

UConn complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Contact: Office of Institutional Equity; (860) 486-2943; equity@uconn.edu; www.equity.uconn.edu.