

9/22/23

Dear students,

We want to update you on the interdisciplinary focuses in our refined curriculum. See below for key info, resources, context, and common questions. Many thanks to the faculty and students who helped bring clarity and distinction to our academic program. We are proud of the results.

Buckle up: this is a long, but important message. Still have questions after reading? Reach out to your primary advisor, other faculty, me, any Division Chair or any Dean. We are happy to help you find your path. That's why we're here!

– Brian  
Provost & Principal Academic Officer

### **Interdisciplinary Focuses**

Going forward, students will craft their self-designed majors through one of five interdisciplinary focuses, which speak to our broad strengths as a College while retaining the flexibility and student agency that has long made Antioch special.

Pre-approved interdisciplinary focuses include:

- **Culture, Power, and Change**
- **Interdisciplinary Arts and Creative Practice**
- **Global Studies and Engagement**
- **Social Enterprise and Social Innovation**
- **Sustainability and the Environment**

### **Resources**

- [Major Declaration Form](#) (revised July 1, 2023) – A simpler process!
- [2023-2024 Curriculum Catalog](#) – The nuts and bolts!
- [Academic Landing Page](#) – How it all fits together!

### **Key Context**

We aren't like other schools and we don't have to try to be. We are betting on academic program quality and distinction, then doubling down on student diversity and our bedrock

commitment to action and justice. The recent US News ranking in the top 100 National Liberal Arts Colleges validates these efforts.

The refined curriculum is the result of hard work and good planning by faculty and students last year to identify academic strengths that unite our faculty and provide additional guidance and support to students. Faculty ratified the revised curriculum in May 2023, which fulfilled a strategic plan priority under President Fernandes' leadership.

**A key fact:** The refined curriculum is based around existing courses, existing faculty, existing self-designed major requirements, and existing accreditation. Therefore it is more accurate to call this a refined or revised curriculum, not a “new” curriculum. That means, we don’t need an elaborate transition plan between a “new” and “old” curriculum. We are simply providing more guidance to students for how to make a successful and high-quality path through the self-designed curriculum.

**A key reminder:** All students complete an individual capstone project. That is where your unique work and independence truly shine! Unlike other colleges, Antioch includes capstone titles and descriptions on your transcript, along with the self-designed major description. Now, by anchoring those capstone projects in recognized interdisciplinary focuses, your work will carry more weight and resonance in the world.

## Common Questions

### **I haven't yet filed my degree plan for the self-designed major. What form do I use?**

Easy! The revised declaration form is for everyone. We have fully phased out the old form, which included outdated information and options and lots of signatures. We think you'll find the revised form is much simpler and straightforward.

You simply pick the three main elements of your self-designed major: interdisciplinary focus, primary division, BA or BS. Think of it like a recipe with a protein, vegetable, and sauce – you still have to prepare, cook, and season it your own way!

### **How do I build my degree plan within an interdisciplinary focus?**

Same as always: with your primary advisor! Faculty have simply provided more guidance about which courses can successfully fit together around broad themes that speak to our core strengths. To help, all courses are now “tagged” by which focus they contribute, which is noted in our course schedule each term. We are also working with faculty to develop advising lists in each area so you know your potential “crew.” Stay tuned.

### **I already filed my degree plan and I like it. Do I need to change it?**

Nope. If you already filed your plan and title for your self-designed major, carry on. We continue to work within existing courses, existing faculty, and existing self-designed major requirements. Your plans can proceed as always.

### **I already filed my degree plan but I like the new focuses. Can I switch?**

Of course! We also think the new interdisciplinary focuses are pretty great and reflect what students have been doing all along. Simply file a new declaration form, as always.

### **I got here before fall 2023. Can I use the old curriculum?**

The refined curriculum is based on existing courses, faculty, and requirements (BA or BS). Technically, there is no “old” curriculum. Therefore, there is no need for a transition plan from an “old” to “new” curriculum.

What is new are pre-approved pathways through the universal self-designed major. They are organized around our strengths with additional guidance for how students can fulfill requirements to achieve the ultimate goal: successfully earning a BA or BS degree.

### **What will my transcript say?**

The Antioch transcript contains two unique elements:

1. Self-Designed Major: Interdisciplinary Focus Title, with description (standard language)

Your degree (BA or BS) will list the interdisciplinary focus of your self-designed path, along with the standard description to explain it to future employers and schools. This will affiliate your work with areas of strength and distinction at Antioch.

This element replaces student-drafted titles and descriptions, which we found changed frequently and did not always reflect the curriculum or translate to how the rest of the world understands fields of study.

2. Independent Capstone: Individual Title, with description (student-drafted)

Your transcript will ALSO include the title and description of your capstone project. This highlights your unique work within the broad interdisciplinary focus and primary division.

As always, you will write the title and description. You will submit this to the Registrar later in your academic journey, when you have a clearer and deeper sense of your work. We continue to be delighted and surprised by the unique projects Antioch students pursue!

**I have an idea that doesn't fit in one of the new focuses. What are my options?**

First, we think the new focuses are flexible enough to accommodate most any interest that can be successfully pursued at Antioch. Talk to your primary advisor. And remember that your truly individual work will culminate in your capstone project, which appears separately on your transcript.

Still, there remains an option for an “off-menu” self-designed focus. Use the declaration form and degree planning sheet, as always. You are responsible for developing a proposal and demonstrating that it can work, meet academic requirements, and doesn't fit within one of the focuses. Your proposal is subject to faculty committee approval. This has always been true, though it fell out of practice during the pandemic.

**I have a lot of strong opinions about the curriculum. How can I be heard or make change?**

Great! Student participation in the curriculum is important to us and reflects Antioch's commitment to community governance. Consider joining the Curriculum Committee or the General Education Review Task Force. There are student slots on each.

Interested? Contact ComCil or the relevant committee chair: Forest Bright / Curriculum Committee & Dean Snyder / General Education Review Task Force.