

# Interdisciplinary Major proposal “Urban Studies” Allison Sauls

As of the year 2008 fifty percent (50%) of the world's population resides in urban areas. Midway through this century that number is expected to climb to seventy percent (70%). There are currently four hundred cities on earth with populations of over one million people and nineteen metropolises' with populations of over ten million inhabitants. As this rapid urbanization continues worldwide, cities have come into focus as the hub of economic, political, and cultural change.

However, cities are not just defined by ambiguous phenomena and statistics but instead are multifaceted and multidimensional centers of human life. The aspects of a city that affect the people who live in them include but are not limited to the following: types of and affordability of housing, means of transportation, the availability of jobs and the vitality of the urban economy, health care/health services offered, educational options, the policies that govern the city, a city's culture, and the presence of faith communities. All of these aspects contribute to the quality and sustainability of life in urban areas.

The field of urban studies is truly interdisciplinary and students of this discipline take courses from many different disciplines across academia. While Hendrix College does not have a degree program in Urban Studies, it is a field recognized across the academic world. Many colleges and universities offer a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Urban Studies. Two such institutions are Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Trinity degree program requires that students complete the universities "common curriculum," and the urban studies core which consists of three courses, in addition students choose to focus on one of the following urban studies concentrations: public policy, urban society or the built environment. Urban Studies majors at Washington University must complete a course which serves as an overview of urban studies, an applied statistics course, an independent study or internship, and a senior capstone experience. In addition the Urban Studies department has four areas of concentration of which students must choose one to complete: neighborhoods and community development, urban education, cities of the world, and public policy/social policy.

I intend to take advantage of courses offered by several departments at Hendrix in order to create a major comparable to those offered at other institutions; by doing so I hope to gain an understanding of the breadth and complexity of issues surrounding the city. Attached is a list of courses which make up the required courses for my interdisciplinary major.

I have applied to and have been accepted for the spring semester of my junior year to attend "The Washington Semester Program" offered at American University, in Washington D.C. I am particularly interested in the specific focus offered by the program entitled "Transforming Communities and Public Policy." I believe that this program will be very illuminating as to the issues and opportunities surrounding urban areas. As well as allowing me to complete an internship in a setting directly related to my career/vocational interest.

Finally in my senior year at Hendrix I will need to complete a senior capstone experience. The experience will consist of a paper and a presentation, the exact topic to be determined through my research/observations during my Service Fellowship this summer, my

time and experiences at the Washington Semester “Transforming Communities and Public Policy” program next spring, as well as my present and future course work. This will be carried out as an independent study course and thus it will be used as one of the credits for the major. The grade for the experience/course will be determined by my committee collectively.

## Courses for Urban Studies Major:

ECON 340 Environmental Economics  
ECON 380 Public Finance

HIST 214 Poverty and Welfare in America (Spring 2009)

PHIL 201 Focus: Ethics in the Face of Poverty (Spring 2010)

POLI 235 Public Policy (Fall 2009)  
POLI 260 Political Economy (Spring 2009)

ANTH 360 Globalization and Transnationalism  
SOC 270 Racial and Ethnic Minorities OR SOC 390 Social Inequality and Identity  
SOC 300 The Urban Community  
SOC 362 Images of the City (Spring 2010)  
SOC 365 Picturing Society: Readings in Social Thought

Senior Thesis

WASHINGTON SEMESTER  
Seminar  
Internship  
Elective

## Supporting Courses

ANTH 240 Applying Anthropology (Fall 2009)  
PSYC 290 Statistics (Fall 2009)

# The Washington Semester Program at American University

## Focus: Transforming Communities and Public Policy

The program addresses issues in our communities and presents inspiring examples of people, organizations, and policies that are making a difference in them.

### THE SEMINAR (2 course)

- capitalizes on the resources of DC, as the center of federal policy and a hub of creative community programs
- consists of class activities, sessions with guest speaker, student presentations, group discussions, and class readings
- the professor presents a lecture each week that prepares students for meetings with speakers.

### THE INTERNSHIP (1 course)

- Internships are available in public, private, or nonprofit sector, working in policy making, or project planning
- The program assists students with placement, sponsors students, liaises your office supervisor, and provides a class to augment your work experience.
- Students work 16 to 20 hours per week

### THE RESEARCH PROJECT (1 course)

- In conjunction with student's internship, the research component of the semester takes the students inside the world of community of improvement as one explores an issue related to policy or grassroots activism that particularly interests a student
- A member of the American University faculty works with students in refining your topic and providing advice and feedback in various stages of your project

### Elective Course

- Depending on home school's requirements, a student may choose to enroll in an elective class instead of the research project. American University offers hundreds of course in numerous fields from which a student may choose. A student may select an evening course from any curriculum area to fulfill requirements at a student's home school.

## Interdisciplinary Committee

Peg Falls-Corbitt Dr. Falls-Corbitt (chair) 3-4-10 Date

Robert M. Capek Dr. Capek 3-3-10 Date

John Sanders Dr. Sanders 3-9-10 Date

Allison Sauls Allison Sauls (student) 3-9-10 Date