

Contract Majors

The purpose of the Contract Major (CM) is to allow highly motivated students to follow a course of study outside the boundaries of established majors. In offering the option of a CM, the faculty of Augustana College encourages students to be creative in constructing their learning experiences. The CM allows students to draw upon the wealth of coursework offered at the College to develop a major that corresponds to their particular interests and goals.

Designing a major: Students who are in good academic standing, with a GPA of 3.3 or above, can submit a proposal for a major to the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) by week seven of spring semester of their sophomore year (prior to obtaining the final 60 credits necessary for graduation). EPC will review the proposal, approve or deny it, or return it to the student for revisions.

Format of the proposal: The proposal should be developed with the advice and support of a faculty member from the field with the greatest number of credits represented. This faculty member should also agree to be the student's advisor. The document should include a rationale for the major, a specific list of courses to complete the major, a brief description of a senior project, and an endorsement from the faculty advisor. Each of these sections is discussed further below.

Rationale: The student must convince EPC that the major represents a rigorous, focused, cohesive area of study. Cohesion can be achieved in a variety of ways such as thematically (the history of health as depicted in works of literature) or chronologically (the medieval world view). Students must explain how each course they designate contributes to the major. The proposal should address why the student could not obtain the same coursework or desired study experience within an existing major.

Courses: Contract majors consist of 28 credits of coursework, 16 of which must be 300-level courses or above. The courses must be distributed across at least three disciplines. Independent and directed study coursework within the contract major can be taken only for one-credit and must adhere to college policies for IND/DIR coursework. Major courses may also fill general education requirements. As with other majors, an average GPA of 2.0 or above in major courses is necessary for graduation.

Senior Project: The student must propose and complete a senior project. Students must propose the project by week seven of spring semester of their junior year to a panel of at least three faculty members including the student's major advisor and two additional faculty from areas represented by the major. That panel shall determine the activities and outcomes necessary for the successful completion of the project. The project proposal should be reported to EPC and must meet the standards for Senior Inquiry adopted by the faculty (see below).

Faculty Endorsement: The student's faculty advisor should write a brief statement of support for the proposed contract major, including the coursework and senior project, affirming that the major is both well-designed and feasible. The advisor should also assert his/her willingness to advise the student until graduation.

Endorsement of Participating Departments: The student must secure a brief statement of support for the courses selected for the proposed contract major from the chairs of each department with courses represented in the proposal. The statement should affirm that the courses selected by the student are appropriate for the student's stated purposes as described in the contract major proposal.

Guidelines for Senior Inquiry: (Prepared for the Faculty by the General Education Committee)

- The SI project is substantial in meaning and impact. The project should be meaningful to the student in that the student identifies the question/topic independently or in collaboration with the instructor. The student will communicate why the project is meaningful and impactful via a reflective component.
- The SI project is communicative of the discoveries made in the project. It includes substantial writing and/or visible results.
- The project is reflective of one or more of (a) the nature of knowledge and inquiry; (b) self-awareness and connection with others; (c) the relationship of individuals to a community. This will be demonstrated through appropriate forms of reflection on learning.
- The project integrates various elements of the student's education, with specific emphasis (i.e., two or more areas) of the Gen Ed curriculum.
- The project results in a permanent record.

Students should use the [Contract Major Checklist](#) and the [CM Senior Inquiry form](#) as they develop their proposal and complete the major.

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