

The SLA Coordinate Major: Description, Rationale, and Guidelines

SLA Curriculum Committee
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What is a Coordinate Major?

Over the years, the "coordinate major" has emerged to provide students with an education rooted in the liberal arts tradition while providing them with a focused framework for research and study in a specific interdisciplinary field or topic of interest. A coordinate major is paired (coordinated) with a separate, primary major in an existing discipline. This existing discipline is the primary major that supplies the writing intensive requirement, the service learning requirement, and the capstone course. A coordinate major is designed to complement other majors while drawing on courses in the social sciences, arts, and humanities.

Currently, coordinate majors have either an "open-ended" or "closed-ended" structure. Coordinate majors like Digital Media, International Development, and Asian Studies have an "open-ended" structure whereby students major in the interdisciplinary field if they have a separate major in any existing discipline. Other coordinate majors like Cognitive Studies and Social Policy and Practice (SPP) have a "closed-ended" structure that allows students to major in the interdisciplinary field if they have a separate major in a specific, designated discipline in the School of Liberal Arts (SLA). The Social Policy and Practice (SPP) coordinate major, for example, is paired with three disciplines: Economics, Sociology, and Political Science. A student must major in at least one of these primary majors to have a coordinate major in SPP. Closed-ended and open-ended coordinate majors cannot be the primary major.

A department, institute, center, or interdisciplinary program should be the institutional "home" of the coordinate major. These organizational units arrange for the faculty members to offer the courses, advise the student majors, and assess the major via SACs. Consistent with SLA guidelines, all coordinate majors should have a minimum of 27 credit hours for the major, a maximum of three 1000-level courses, a minimum of five courses at or above the 2000 level. Students must maintain at least a 2.0 in their coordinate major. Courses taken S/U cannot be counted toward the major, and at least one-half of coordinate major credit hours must be earned in courses taught by Tulane University faculty members. On the one hand, coordinate majors do NOT need to offer honors thesis hours, a capstone course, service learning course, or writing intensive options. On the other hand, coordinate majors are not prohibited from offering an honors thesis option, capstone or service learning courses, or writing intensive requirement. In general, however, these can be completed through the student's primary major. A coordinate major does not have to have its own courses and may use courses from other departments and programs as requirements and electives (with the permission from department chair or program director).

Specific Rationales for the Coordinate Major

The coordinate major gives students and faculty flexibility to allow students to fulfill some of their graduation requirements in curricula from other departments and programs. Coordinate majors tend to interest students looking for novel thematic and topical areas of study. For faculty, the coordinate major can be a mechanism to foster intellectual collaboration by providing a dynamic and flexible structure in which faculty members have some fluidity of movement between or across disciplinary homes. The coordinate major can assist in leveraging

of external funding to support faculty research and education agenda and interests (e.g., Music Rising grant). The coordinate major can help recruit and retain a diverse and distinguished faculty by offering them teaching and research opportunities in multiple interdisciplinary and disciplinary areas. Coordinate major can help recruit and retain high quality students by expanding the range of course offerings and education opportunities in SLA's disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. Finally, the coordinate major can expand and improve graduate education by drawing on the strengths of SLA's diversity and mix of scholars, academic departments, programs, and centers.

Guidelines for Establishing a Coordinate Major in SLA

Faculty must submit proposals for new coordinate majors to the SLA Dean's Office before submitting to the SLA Curriculum Committee.

Proposals to establish Coordinate majors must contain the following sections:

1. Description and Justification

Describe the field of study in jargon-free language so that a student can understand it. Why is this new coordinate major important and necessary for Tulane University? Do other universities offer this major? List a few. Is there student demand for the major?

2. SACS Assessment materials

Provide the following information pertaining to SACS Assessment materials:

- Mission statement
- Specific measurable learning outcomes
- Assessments of those outcomes
- (Results)
- (Plans for change or improvements)

Note: new coordinate majors will not have results to assess, or plans for change or improvements. Nevertheless, all proposals to establish coordinate majors must include a mission statement, specific measurable learning outcomes, and clear procedures for assessing those outcomes.

3. Organization

Like other majors, a coordinate major should be based in a department, center, institute, or interdisciplinary program with sufficient numbers of full-time faculty members who are responsible for overseeing, managing, and evaluating the coordinate major. List the faculty involved with program. Include full-time affiliated faculty, professors of practice, joint appointments, and so on. List the faculty members on the advisory board. Explain the task and responsibility of members; and the schedule of meetings.

4. Curriculum

List the number of credit hours and courses needed to complete the coordinate major. Please include course number and course title. Mention any distribution requirements. Identify all

courses, including electives, required, or courses fulfilling distribution requirements, as to whether these are stand-alone or cross-listed.

Do you anticipate any problems with students being able to get into these courses? How will new courses be created?

Will you rely on adjuncts to teach any courses? If so, which ones?

How will you recruit students to the coordinate major?

How will you recruit faculty to teach courses for the coordinate major?

Please note that there must be at least 18 separate courses in the combined set of the two majors. That is, if you make a list of all the courses that are used to complete Major 1 requirements, and another list of all the courses used to complete major 2 requirements, and then count each course once, even if it appears on both lists, there should be at least 18 courses. If a third major is added, there must be a total of 27 separate courses for the three majors; for 4 majors, there must be at least 36 separate courses, etc.

5. Funding and Budget

Describe the current budget arrangements you have established with the SLA Dean's Office for funding the implementation of the coordinate major. What are the sources of the budget? How will you spend the budget to meet the goals and objectives of the coordinate major? Please note that budgets and resources must be negotiated with the SLA Dean before the SLA Curriculum Committee discusses and evaluates the proposal to establish a coordinate major.

What support are you asking from SLA to support the coordinate major?

What non-Tulane resources (e.g., grants and external funds) are you pursuing to support the coordinate major?