

# SPECIALIZED STUDIES (BS)

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## Introduction

Specialized Studies enables students to develop their own majors and degree plans by combining courses from different departments to create a focused outcome. Students who find that Canisius does not offer majors that match their interests, talents, future goals and employment niches may propose their own plans of study based on existing coursework. A student does this by seeking the assistance of the associate dean and two faculty members to assist with creating a plan of study and goal counseling.

## Approval Criteria

This program is available to any Canisius student who wishes to create her/his own field of study, has a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better, and has secured the approval of at least two faculty members who will support their plans. Incoming students who plan to create a specialized major should matriculate as undeclared and may begin working with an academic advisor and/or a faculty member after the completion of their first semester to start the proposal process. Creating a sound proposal will require:

- An in-depth explanation of future and career goals as well as learning objectives as they relate to the proposed Specialized Studies major.
- An exact list of proposed courses including a detailed narrative outlining the rationale regarding their relation to each other and the student's future goals.
- Two letters of support from Canisius faculty members. The letters should state why this specialized plan makes sense for this student and why the college should have confidence that the student can complete the plan.
- One of the above faculty members must, in writing, agree to be the academic advisor for the student and work with the student to develop a senior project that is relevant to the coursework and intended learning goals.
- A detailed timeline for completion. Prerequisites, sequencing and course offerings must be taken into consideration.

Students shall submit the proposal to their designated faculty advisor, who will submit it and letters of support (see above) for final approval by the appropriate dean(s). If it becomes necessary to adjust the plan, changes must be discussed with and agreed upon by the faculty advisor.

## Time to Completion

As with any major, Specialized Studies requires a minimum of 120 credit hours and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better for graduation.

## Questions

Please direct any questions about the Specialized Studies major to the Dean of Arts & Sciences.

## Curriculum

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All undergraduate students must complete either the Canisius Core Curriculum (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/core-curriculum>) or the All-College Honors Curriculum (<http://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/all-college-honors-program>). Many schools refer

to their college-wide undergraduate requirements as "general education" requirements. We believe that the core curriculum and the honors curriculum are more than a series of required classes; they provide the basis for a Jesuit education both with content and with required knowledge and skills attributes that are central to our mission.

## Free Electives

Students may graduate with more but not less than 120 credit hours. Free electives are courses in addition to the Core Curriculum or Honors Curriculum and major requirements sufficient to reach the minimum of 120 credit hours required for graduation.

## Major Requirements Specialized Studies Courses

- 36 credits minimum in the Specialized Studies Curriculum
- 21 of these credits must be upper level courses (300-400 level - graduate courses may also be considered).
- 3 credits: Senior Project (see below for details).

**Note:** If a chosen course requires a pre-requisite the student must include this in the plan. No pre-requisite courses are to be waived.

## Senior Project

Under the direction of a faculty member, the student must undertake an independent scholarly or creative senior project that is submitted, exhibited, completed, or performed no later than the last day of classes. The project will be subject to peer and professional review in methods appropriate for the fields of endeavor as required by the advisor and faculty member. The student should work with the faculty member to develop a project proposal no later than week six of the semester prior to degree completion (i.e. around November 1st for May graduation).

## Learning Goals & Objectives

These are developed as part of the proposal for majoring in Specialized Studies.