

## *Bachelor of Special Studies*

### *(B.S.S. Degree Program)*

The Bachelor of Special Studies degree offers Cornell students the opportunity to design their own liberal arts degree program in order to meet their particular educational goals. This opportunity permits students to combine courses in an individualized fashion and to broaden or deepen their studies beyond the traditional framework of the Bachelor of Arts. Accordingly, the B.S.S. has no general education requirements and no restrictions as to either the number of courses that may be taken in any one department or the level of such courses, or even that a student complete traditional course work. Moreover, while students pursuing a B.S.S. degree may complete one or more departmental, interdepartmental, or interdisciplinary major, they are not required to complete an academic major.

The particular requirements for the Bachelor of Special Studies degree are:

- Complete a minimum of 32 term credits.
- Achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher.
- File for candidacy by submitting the Prospectus at any time after October 1 of the sophomore year.
- Complete a minimum of 14 course credits *after the Prospectus is filed*. (Transfer students entering Cornell with junior standing must complete a minimum of 12 course credits following the filing of the Prospectus; those admitted with senior standing must complete a minimum of six course credits.)

The Bachelor of Special Studies degree is defined by the Prospectus, a detailed plan outlining the student's B.S.S. degree program. The Prospectus incorporates a narrative description of the program and a chronology of courses that will be taken by the student to fulfill the goals outlined in the narrative description. The Prospectus is to be written by the student, reviewed and signed by a faculty committee composed of a primary advisor and two readers, and filed with the Registrar, who verifies that it is complete and that it meets current academic regulations as set forth by the faculty. The signed Prospectus is considered an agreement between the student and the College.

Course changes that involve substitution of courses accomplishing the same goals as courses originally projected require only an add/drop form. However, significant deviations from the program outlined in the Prospectus must be justified in a letter to the Registrar written by the student and approved by the student's B.S.S. faculty committee *before* the student may change the agreement. Significant deviations would include:

- a shift in emphasis or direction of the program of study
- the addition or deletion of a major or minor
- a decrease in the ratio of upper-level to lower-level courses
- the substitution of three or more independent studies or internships for scheduled courses

If you have questions concerning the Bachelor of Special Studies Degree, please contact the Registrar, or your faculty advisor.

*Instructions and General Information  
for Students Contemplating  
the Bachelor of Special Studies*

1. Obtain a copy of the guidelines for the Narrative and the Chronology from the Registrar's Office at the end of your first or the beginning of your second year.
2. Discuss your proposed B.S.S. program with your advisor or one or more members of the faculty.
3. Choose a committee of three faculty members including a primary advisor who will help you create your B.S.S. program and two faculty readers who, along with your primary advisor, will review and sign your Prospectus. The primary advisor and faculty readers must either be members of the full-time teaching faculty or part-time members who have been selected by the Department or Program to advise B.S.S. students and to sign their Prospectus'. Some departments may choose certain members to advise all of their B.S.S. students. If you declare one or more majors, your primary advisor *must* be a member of a department in which you will have a major.
4. In conjunction with your primary advisor, begin planning your B.S.S. program *prior to registering for your junior year*. Write a 500-1000 word Narrative and complete the Chronology. Rewrite until your primary advisor gives initial approval to your Prospectus.
5. Circulate your Prospectus to two faculty readers and schedule a group meeting with your primary advisor and your two faculty readers. After this review, your faculty committee may either approve and sign your Prospectus, or suggest revisions to strengthen it. If revisions are suggested, rewrite and re-circulate the revised document to each of your three committee members for their approval. Once approved, the Prospectus must be signed by each member of the faculty committee and filed with the Registrar, who will verify that it is complete and meets current academic regulations as set forth by the Faculty.

Your faculty committee will evaluate the Prospectus according to these criteria:

- Is it technically well-written (grammar, spelling, organization)?
  - Is it conceptually well-written (articulation of program clear? goals achievable? means reasonable?)
  - Is the Chronology consistent with the Narrative?
  - Is the plan consistent with the educational aims of the College?
  - Are the activities outside the classroom, in BSS 690 terms or other experiences, consistent with the Narrative and the Chronology?
6. File your Prospectus with the Registrar any time after October 1 of your sophomore year. If it is complete and found to conform to current academic regulations, the Registrar will notify you of its approval. The Prospectus will become part of your permanent file at the College.
  7. You must obtain the written permission of your faculty committee for any significant changes from the Prospectus *before* effecting such changes. If in doubt as to whether the changes are significant, consult your primary advisor or the Registrar.
  8. In the fall of the student's senior year, the Registrar will review each candidate's B.S.S. program to determine whether the student has registered for the same or similar courses as are listed on the Chronology of Courses included in the student's Prospectus. (This review occurs during the senior conference, described in the *Catalogue* section on Degree Programs.) *A student who has made significant deviations from the B.S.S. Prospectus without prior written approval of the faculty committee will not be awarded the B.S.S. degree.*

## Guidelines for the Narrative

It will be important to address two matters in your narrative. One is the matter of your educational and professional goals. Be sure to identify those goals, commenting specifically on how you came to develop them, why they are important to your future, and how the program you propose will allow you to meet them.

The other matter to be addressed is the connection between your program and the general liberal arts values of Cornell. In essence, according to "The Aims of the College" as published in the *Catalogue*, Cornell College "endorses liberal education as an end in itself and as a means of empowering students for leadership through productive careers and humane service in the global community." In particular, the College endeavors to allow Cornell students to:

- explore widely the range of human experience and investigate carefully the work of a chosen discipline;
- analyze problems and synthesize solutions;
- integrate theory and practice;
- read critically, reason effectively, engage creatively, feel deeply, evaluate fairly, respond imaginatively, communicate clearly, and act responsibly.

In your narrative, understanding that not all areas will be equally emphasized, be sure to describe the extent to which the program that you propose will enable you to achieve these aims.

Because much learning takes place outside the classroom, your chronology may not suggest the full range of your educational experiences and intellectual and cultural interests. You should, therefore, include in the narrative all those activities, interests and experiences that you consider relevant to your having achieved or your achieving the aims stated above. Such things might include your extracurricular activities at Cornell or in high school; community or organizational service at college or elsewhere; jobs, travel, hobbies, private study, and family background.

Finally, since this narrative will be read as an indication of your capacities to conceive, organize, and articulate your ideas, it will be important for you to take care in its preparation and presentation. All submissions should be typed.

## Guidelines for the Chronology

1. List courses, including course number and title, and the year that they were or will be taken. Numbers correspond to the term the course will be taken. List Adjunct courses (if any) on lines labeled "A."
2. Designate courses that were taken at another institution by writing "Transfer" after the title.
3. Courses to be transferred from another college or university for a combined degree program should be included in the chronology.

**PROSPECTUS**  
**for the**  
**BACHELOR OF SPECIAL STUDIES DEGREE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Box # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary B.S.S. Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Reader 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Reader 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Major, if any (as a B.S.S. candidate, a major is not required):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Minor, if any (as a B.S.S. candidate, a minor is not required):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Concentration, if any (note definition of a *concentration*, below):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Primary B.S.S. Advisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Reader's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Reader's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

A *concentration* is an individualized program, not possible under an existing major, designed by you and your B.S.S. advisor to facilitate specialized study in a particular field. Such programs may include catalogue courses, independent studies, internships, and off-campus study. Concentrations are informal and are not listed on a student's transcript. If your program includes an interdisciplinary major (certified by the Registrar on behalf of the Dean of the College), please attach a *Contract for an Interdisciplinary Major* form (available from the Registrar's Office).

If you are planning to major in Elementary, Secondary, or Music Education and apply for teacher licensure, you must complete a series of General Education requirements established by the State of Iowa and outlined in the *Catalogue*. You must also apply for admission to the Teacher Education Program. The regulations governing Teacher Education are the same for B.A. and B.S.S. candidates. As a student planning to pursue those goals, it is your responsibility to be certain that your proposed Chronology of Courses includes courses that meet the necessary requirements.

For additional information, contact the Registrar.

# CHRONOLOGY OF COURSES

Candidate's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Please refer to accompanying instructions prior to completing this form.

## First Year (20\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_

## Third Year (20\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_

## Second Year (20\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_

## Fourth Year (20\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_