

Proposal for a new BA

List of working group members

Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain	MLCS
Sara Dorow	Sociology
Garrett Epp	English & Film Studies / UAlberta-Lille program
Helena Fracchia	History and Classics / Cortona program
David Gramit	Music
Jennifer Hsu	Political Science
Kaori Kabata ^{**}	East Asian Studies / Prince Takamado Japan Centre
Claudia Kost	MLCS
Xiaoting Li [*]	East Asian Studies
Jordon Lachler	Linguistics / CILLDI
Aidan Rowe	Art & Design
Christian Reynolds	MLCS / French in La Rochelle
Kim Noels [*]	Psychology
Elena Nicholadis [*]	Psychology
Carrie Smith-Prei	MLCS
Federico Spinetti	Music

*starting members, ** main contact

1. Overview of the proposal

The main theme of the proposed BA is '**Interdisciplinary, Intercultural, and International**'. We believe such a BA will better foster students' motivation and skills to contribute positively and actively to their local communities and to global society. Moreover, we believe that the proposed BA will provide students with situations in which they are required to think critically and creatively. Although it is necessary for students to acquire new information, we aim to create a program in which students will go beyond the memorization of facts and received wisdom, and develop their capacity to manipulate that information to create new knowledge, and apply that knowledge, thinking analogically, to solving conceptual and practical problems. In addition, they will learn to do so with sensitivity to human relations and contextual specificity.

The proposed BA will incorporate international and/or intercultural experience, through study abroad programs, community-engaged learning programs, and/or internship programs. It will also better allow students to take courses from various departments or outside of the Faculty as appropriate. This new BA works well with various existing certificate programs, including Translation Certificate programs in various languages, the newly proposed European Studies Certificate, and the Community

Service-Learning (CSL) program, as well as the Global Citizenship Curriculum Development (GCCD) program.

Students will normally be required to complete a capstone project and/or a thesis at the end of their program, bringing together the diverse things that they have learned, experienced, and developed during the program. Such projects would represent both the synthesis of their interdisciplinary, intercultural, international learning and help point them in the direction of further career/study goals.

Possible structures include multidisciplinary thematic minors, combined Honours programs, and/or thematic certificate programs that incorporate issues of interculturalism and internationalism. We propose that we maintain the major system, while allowing more flexibility in terms of the number and types of combinations of majors, minors, and certificates. Such flexibility will be necessary in order to facilitate the kind of student learning that makes for successful completion of a capstone project or thesis, and to facilitate the sort of interdisciplinary and intercultural work that we expect this program to foster, well into the future for each student.

2. Goals of the proposed new BA

The new BA will prepare students to become 'glocal' citizens who think globally and act locally, being equipped with:

Skills: (i) critical thinking and problem solving skills, (ii) creative and analogical thinking, (iii) writing and communication skills, (iv) interpersonal and intercultural skills, and (v) research skills, as well as (vi) media literacy.

Attributes: (i) international capacity, (ii) intercultural awareness, (iii) intellectual autonomy and self-reliance, and (iv) social responsibility. We also want our students to (v) be willing to take a risk when a chance arises.

Knowledge: (i) fundamental knowledge, (ii) local and global knowledge, (iii) community connections, and (iv) interdisciplinary interconnectedness.

3. Major components of the new BA

The above goals will be achieved by incorporating the following elements as either requirements or strong recommendations for the students:

Flexible major/minor system: We maintain that the major/minor system as we have in the current BA is compatible with the new BA. However, we propose that students be allowed to take multiple majors, minors, and

certificates in various combinations. Moreover, student enrolled in an Honours program would be permitted to take a greater variety of minors. We also see the necessity to ensure the breadth of courses and disciplines students will be introduced to during their BA program.

Capstone projects/papers: Currently not many major programs, if any, require students to complete a capstone project or a paper. This project would itself constitute an important learning endeavor (either by way of synthesis of past experiences, or by producing an original piece of research/creative output, or both). The capstone project may take the form of a substantial report reflecting on and revisiting the student's international experiences, community learning experience, or internship programs, or an original piece of research or creative output elaborating on aspects of such experiences. Some flexibility of format here may help to accommodate a variety of student backgrounds and interests: written report, written research piece, art exhibit, multimedia and audiovisual outputs, creative writing, composition, performance, etc. Students may bridge this project between courses or programs in two different areas.

International and intercultural experience: Students will be strongly encouraged, if not required, to experience study or work abroad and/or in culturally distinct settings during their BA program. Students may do so either through the internship opportunities provided by the UAI for several different countries, studying at one of the UAlberta campuses abroad (e.g. Cortona, Lille), or going to study on exchange programs. Students may opt for a shorter study program, such as summer programs or courses offered by various departments and centres. Students who are unable to travel could fulfill this component through work experience in a local or provincial organization where cultural issues would be relevant. The new BA will recognize students with international experience within the degree. It should also recognize students who come into the Faculty of Arts with an international background, although they should be encouraged to further broaden their international experience.

Community Engaged Learning: The new BA will include more opportunities to complete courses that are part of the Community Service-Learning program. Local CSL places students in contexts that enrich interdisciplinary and intercultural learning, and also helps them prepare for international experiences outside of Canada.

Internship opportunities: The new BA will accommodate more internship opportunities, either in local settings or abroad.

Introductory course(s) for all the BA students that surveys different cultures and disciplines: The new BA will require students to take not only first-year writing intensive courses but also a course that will introduce them

to different cultures, ways of thinking, and traditions, and to various theories in the study of culture. The main focus will be on diversity training, either cultural or otherwise. Some of the CSL courses should also be part of the requirement in the new BA.

Meaningful Language Learning: Learning language(s) other than English at a certain level should be mandatory. We recommend minimum 12 credit units as requirement. Students should also be strongly encouraged to take content courses in a language other than English, either on campus (through MLCS and EAS, or Campus Saint-Jean, for example), or through study abroad programs.

Technology enhanced learning: The new BA should continue to integrate new technology in both teaching and learning. The recent initiative for online courses should be taken into consideration in developing the above mentioned introductory courses.

4. Additional elements for the new BA

The new BA should also allow students to develop a sense of 'community'. This can be done, for example, by creating student groups with a few faculty members serving as advisors, or by working together on CSL community projects. We expect such a system will encourage students to seek help when necessary, and to help each other through the program. Through such a system, we may also require students to develop annual plans to set benchmarks for their own academic goals within the year, and to report to their advisors.

All incoming students, across disciplines, will form groups of about 30, and meet regularly with one assigned professor and the entire group, to give them some support at a large university and to break down boundaries between the disciplines; groups will be purposefully mixed in order to have a variety of subjects/majors represented. The aim is to provide students with more personal contact with a professor (even though they might not be in the same field) and to encourage friendships among students from different fields in the sense of providing a bit of a "liberal arts college" feel. Students will also be encouraged to seek out others – faculty and students alike – with similar interests (grouped by specific language/culture, and/or by discipline, as relevant); faculty could be asked to list (as many already do) their own specific areas of interest in relation to 'Interdisciplinary, Intercultural, and International' study and research.

5. Towards the new BA

We think it is crucial to find out how students perceive the current BA. This will

require both a survey study with as many current students and recent alumni as possible, and a focus group study.

The feasibility of some of the proposed programs, such as the 'community' system (as outlined in 4. above), need to be checked among the faculty members either through survey or focus group.

The new BA should be equipped with ways and means to ensure the quality of the programs, especially those offered abroad, and consequently the credibility of the BA. There should also be a clear measurement of the outcome of students' international experiences.

As we see new certificate programs proposed and/or approved even as we prepare this proposal, we need to make sure the new BA is designed to incorporate them as appropriate.