

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM CHANGE MEMO

Date: 04/22/2024

From: Selfa A. Chew-Melendez, BMS Program Director

Through: Anadeli Bencomo, Dean, College of Liberal Arts

To: Selfa A. Chew Melendez, Chair, Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee

Proposal Title: BMS Curriculum Changes

A reduction of upper-division hours from 45 to 39

While the minimum number of upper-division hours required to receive a bachelor's degree in Texas is 36 hours, the Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies currently requires 45 upper-division credit hours. Reducing this number to 39 will align it with most degree plans in the College of Liberal Arts. The 39 upper-division credit hours requirement can be met through courses added to the concentrations and block electives. Concentrations can be made up of 9 – 15 upper-division hours each.

Removal of level restriction for electives

The reduction of required upper-division hours will affect the electives field. As long as the minimum of 39 upper-division hours is met, and each of the three concentrations includes a minimum of nine upper-division hours, this proposal stipulates that required elective credit hours be fulfilled through any combination of lower and upper-division credit hours.

Course add: BMS 4370 – Seminar

This elective course is designed to offer students the opportunity to synthesize their learning in their concentrations, enabling them to complete the paper or project required for graduation in the Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies. It is also proposed to count as a block elective in the Social Science and Behavior and the Humanities field, as determined by the type of paper or project developed in this seminar.

Course add: BMS 4390 – Directed Study

Individual directed study on an approved topic, to be taught with the consent of the professor and approval from the program director.

BMS Paper or Project

As the BMS paper or project can be submitted at any time, provided it was completed in an upper-division class, the sentence referring to the submission period will be deleted. Typically, the evaluation of BMS program learning outcomes includes the evaluation of communication skills for

which the submission of a project requires an explanation of its process and purpose in order to assess the student's writing proficiency. Such requirement for projects will be added to the catalog.

Correction of catalog text for clarity

Minor text modifications will enhance the description of the degree plan.

Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies

Degree Requirements

The Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies degree requires a minimum of 120 semester hours, including at least 39 hours at the advanced or upper-division (junior and senior) level. In addition to completing the 42-semester-hour University Core Curriculum, each student defines, in consultation with a BMS advisor, three areas of concentration totaling 45 semester hours, including a minimum of 27 hours of advanced work. Each area of concentration is composed of 15 hours, with 9 – 15 hours of advanced coursework. The goal of the concentration is to give students an interdisciplinary foundation that satisfies individual educational and professional goals while maintaining academic rigor and integrity. Thirty-three hours of electives in any combination of lower and upper-division hours bring the degree total to a minimum 120 semester hours, including a minimum of 39 hours of upper-division work.

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Only 66 hours from a two-year institution or community college can apply toward the BMS. A foreign language is not required. A student on the ESOL track who has completed ESOL 1311 AND 1312 is required to complete ESOL 2303.

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A 2.0 GPA is required for graduation.

Degree Plan

The BMS requires 120 total credits for completion with a minimum of 39 upper-division credit hours. If you are a transfer student, be sure to consult with an advisor concerning how many credits must be taken at UTEP for students to meet the 30-hour residency requirement to complete the degree. A 2.0 GPA is required for graduation.

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The BMS degree plan consists of:

Area	Hours
Core Curriculum	42
Three Concentrations	15 Each <u>9-15 upper-division hours</u>
Electives	33
<hr/>	
	<u>120 Total</u>

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Concentrations for the BMS degree are determined by the coursework already completed and/or areas of interest applicable to the BMS program. A 2.0 is required in each concentration.

Please be sure to consult the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog and speak with your academic advisor regarding institutional requirements.

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University Core Curriculum

[Complete the University Core Curriculum requirements.](#)

42

Concentration 1

9-15 upper-division hours

Total

15 Hours

Concentration 2

9-15 upper-division hours

Total

15 Hours

Concentration 3

9-15 upper-division hours

Total

15 Hours

Concentrations Total Hours

45

Elective Credits

Total

33 Hours

Total: 120

In addition to completing organized courses, students will be required to submit a final paper or project, completed in an upper-level class. The submission of a project requires an explanation of its process and purpose. For further information, please see a BMS advisor.

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COURSE ADD

All fields below are required

College : Liberal Arts

Department : Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies (BMS)

Effective Term : Fall 2025

Rationale for adding the course:

This course is optional and designed to offer students the opportunity to synthesize their learning in their concentrations, enabling them to write the BMS paper required for graduation.

All fields below are required

Subject Prefix and # BMS

Title (29 characters or fewer): BMS Seminar

Dept. Administrative Code : 4370

[CIP Code](#) 30

Departmental Approval Required Yes No

Course Level UG GR DR SP

Course will be taught: Face-to-Face Online Hybrid

Course minimum grade: if N leave blank, if Y provide grade 0

- How many times may course be repeated to satisfy minimum grade requirement? 3

How many times may the course be taken for credit? (Please indicate 1-9 times): 1

Should the course be exempt from the "Three Repeat Rule?" Yes No

Grading Mode: Standard Pass/Fail Audit

Description and 2-3 keywords (600 characters maximum):

(Keywords are for Facilitation of course searches and should be words not already included in course title or description)

Contact Hours (per week): 3 Lecture Hours Lab Hours Other

Types of Instruction (Schedule Type): Select all that apply

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A | Lecture | <input type="checkbox"/> H | Thesis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B | Laboratory | <input type="checkbox"/> I | Dissertation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C | Practicum | <input type="checkbox"/> K | Lecture/Lab Combined |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D | Seminar | <input type="checkbox"/> O | Discussion or Review (Study Skills) |

- E Independent Study
- F Private Lesson

- P Specialized Instruction
- Q Student Teaching

Fields below if applicable

If course is taught during a part of term in addition to a full 16-week term please indicate the length of the course (ex., 8 weeks): 8

TCCN (Use for lower division courses) :

Prerequisite(s):		
Course Number/ Placement Test	Minimum Grade Required/ Test Scores	Concurrent Enrollment Permitted? (Y/N)

Corequisite Course(s):

Equivalent Course(s):

Restrictions:	
Classification	Junior, Senior
Major	

The curriculum office recommends consulting with other programs to determine whether there is significant overlap between the proposed course and any existing courses, especially when the course is part of an interdisciplinary program. Evidence of this consultation will facilitate the work of the curriculum committees.

COURSE ADD

All fields below are required

College : Liberal Arts

Department : Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies (BMS)

Effective Term : Fall 2025

Rationale for adding the course:

Supervised individual research leading to development of a major paper or report.

All fields below are required

Subject Prefix and # BMS

Title (29 characters or fewer): BMS Independent Study

Dept. Administrative Code : 4390

[CIP Code](#) 30

Departmental Approval Required Yes No

Course Level UG GR DR SP

Course will be taught: Face-to-Face Online Hybrid

Course minimum grade: if N leave blank, if Y provide grade 0

- How many times may course be repeated to satisfy minimum grade requirement? 3

How many times may the course be taken for credit? (Please indicate 1-9 times): 1

Should the course be exempt from the "Three Repeat Rule?" Yes No

Grading Mode: Standard Pass/Fail Audit

Description and 2-3 keywords (600 characters maximum):

(Keywords are for Facilitation of course searches and should be words not already included in course title or description)

Contact Hours (per week): 3 Lecture Hours Lab Hours Other

Types of Instruction (Schedule Type): Select all that apply

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Lecture | <input type="checkbox"/> H Thesis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B Laboratory | <input type="checkbox"/> I Dissertation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C Practicum | <input type="checkbox"/> K Lecture/Lab Combined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D Seminar | <input type="checkbox"/> O Discussion or Review (Study Skills) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E Independent Study | <input type="checkbox"/> P Specialized Instruction |

F Private Lesson

Q Student Teaching

Fields below if applicable

If course is taught during a part of term in addition to a full 16-week term please indicate the length of the course (ex., 8 weeks): 8

TCCN (Use for lower division courses) :

Prerequisite(s):		
Course Number/ Placement Test	Minimum Grade Required/ Test Scores	Concurrent Enrollment Permitted? (Y/N)

Corequisite Course(s):

Equivalent Course(s):

Restrictions:	
Classification	Junior, Senior
Major	

The curriculum office recommends consulting with other programs to determine whether there is significant overlap between the proposed course and any existing courses, especially when the course is part of an interdisciplinary program. Evidence of this consultation will facilitate the work of the curriculum committees.

BMS SEMINAR
BMS 4370

Instructor: Selfa A. Chew-Meléndez, PhD
E-mail:
Session:
Office:
Virtual office Hours:

Or by appointment.
[Zoom virtual office link](#)

In this course, students will synthesize their learning from at least two distinct disciplines to gain a comprehensive understanding of a problem and its potential solutions. Designed for those who wish to explore intersections across diverse academic fields, the seminar will involve critical discussions, hands-on projects, and research activities aimed at integrating knowledge and methodologies from multiple disciplines. The entire class will study the solutions THAT different disciplines have provided for a particular problem, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to the same problem, which may vary for each section of BMS 4370.

For this course, I have selected environmental problems as the focus of our team assignments. Climate change, pollution, deforestation and THE loss of biodiversity, are complex and interconnected issues which, in turn, require collaboration across disciplines. By bridging academic frontiers, students will develop a holistic perspective that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, fostering creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills essential for addressing real-world challenges. The study of environmental problems is the conduit to posing “personal, civic, ethical, political, and global import and provid(ing) perspectives from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities.”¹ The second phase in this course requires students to select a topic for their individual capstone synthesis project. This phase will include group discussions and peer review sessions.

By the end of the course, students will emerge with a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of knowledge across disciplines and the ability to leverage this understanding to address complex challenges in a rapidly evolving world. Through collaboration, critical thinking, and creative synthesis, students will be equipped to make meaningful contributions to their respective fields and drive positive change in society.

Required textbook

Free e-book access through our library.

Jolas, Eugene, Andreas Kramer, and Rainer Rumold. *Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. 1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

¹ Eugene Jolas, Andreas Kramer, and Rainer Rumold, *Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 1st ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 4.

Additionally, each student will select a book that aligns with their major, or one of several concentrations if a BMS major.

Grading system

Interdisciplinary Dialogue Forum	20%
Cross-Disciplinary Project Proposal	15 %
Interdisciplinary Synthesis Workshop	20%
Capstone Synthesis Project Objective:	45%

90 -100 = A 80 -89 = B 70 - 79 = C 60 - 69 = D -60 =F

Interdisciplinary Dialogue Forum

Objective: Foster critical thinking and interdisciplinary communication skills through structured dialogue.

Description: In this assignment, students will participate in an online interdisciplinary dialogue forum focused on a selected topic or theme. Students will be divided into small groups, each comprised of individuals from different academic backgrounds. Using our Blackboard platform, students will engage in weekly asynchronous discussions, exchanging ideas, perspectives, and insights related to the study of environmental issues.

Guidelines:

1. Each student will select a book relevant to their respective disciplines, ensuring diversity and breadth of discussion.
2. Students will contribute to the forum by posting at least one thought-provoking question, sharing relevant research findings, and critically analyzing the intersection of their disciplines.
3. Participants will be expected to actively engage with their peers' contributions, providing constructive feedback, asking clarifying questions, and challenging assumptions.
4. A peer review session will be coordinated by your instructor through this forum.
5. Throughout the forum, students will reflect on the connections between their own discipline and those of their peers, identifying commonalities, differences, and opportunities for collaboration.

Deliverables:

- Participation in the online dialogue forum, including active engagement with peers' contributions.
- A reflective essay discussing key points from the textbooks assigned, and the insights gained from the interdisciplinary dialogue, highlighting key takeaways, and reflecting on the importance of communication and collaboration across disciplines.

Interdisciplinary Synthesis Workshop

Objective: Develop skills in synthesizing information and perspectives from multiple academic disciplines.

Description: In this assignment, students will participate in an interdisciplinary synthesis workshop focused on techniques for integrating knowledge and perspectives from diverse academic fields. Through guided activities and discussions, students will learn strategies for synthesizing information, identifying common themes, and constructing cohesive arguments that bridge disciplinary boundaries.

Guidelines:

1. Students will explore different synthesis techniques, such as concept mapping, comparative analysis, and integrative frameworks, and apply these methods to interdisciplinary case studies focused on environmental issues.
2. Students will collaborate in small groups to practice synthesizing information from multiple sources, discussing their findings and insights with classmates.
3. The workshop will culminate in a reflective discussion where students share their experiences, challenges, and strategies for interdisciplinary synthesis.

Deliverable:

- Participation in the interdisciplinary synthesis workshop throughout the term, including completion of guided exercises and active engagement in group discussions.
- Two reflective essays discussing their experiences, challenges, and strategies for interdisciplinary synthesis.

Cross-Disciplinary Project Proposal

Objective: Develop interdisciplinary project proposals that integrate knowledge and methodologies from multiple academic fields.

Description: In this assignment, students will work in small groups to develop project proposals that address a specific issue in environmental studies from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Drawing on their respective disciplines, students will identify the scope, objectives, and methodologies for their proposed projects, emphasizing the synthesis of diverse perspectives and approaches.

Guidelines:

1. Groups will collaboratively select a problem or question related to an environmental issue ensuring relevance to their combined areas of study.
2. Students will draw literature reviews from the textbooks assigned for this class and other relevant texts, and conduct research to identify relevant theories, methodologies, and empirical findings from their respective disciplines.
3. Each group will outline the project's objectives, research questions, methodology, and anticipated outcomes, demonstrating how their interdisciplinary approach enhances the project's potential impact and insights.
4. Groups will present their project proposals to the class, soliciting feedback and suggestions for refinement.

Deliverables:

- A written project proposal outlining the problem statement, objectives, research questions, methodology, and anticipated outcomes.
An oral presentation of the project proposal, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the project and addressing questions and feedback from classmates and the instructor.

Capstone Synthesis Project Objective:

Objective: Apply interdisciplinary skills to address a real-world problem or question through a multidisciplinary approach and methodology.

Description: In this culminating assignment, students will work individually to undertake a capstone synthesis project that integrates knowledge and methodologies from their chosen academic fields. Building on their previous coursework and assignments, students will develop innovative solutions to a complex problem or question, demonstrating their ability to synthesize insights and perspectives of at least two disciplines.

Guidelines:

1. Students will select a real-world problem or question that requires an interdisciplinary approach, considering the relevance to their combined areas of study and the potential for impact. This project will not be necessarily based on an environmental issue. If students elect the same topic, they will develop original approaches and give credit to their classmates, requesting their authorization to quote their work.
2. Students will conduct the necessary research to develop their project, drawing on diverse sources of information, theories, and methodologies from their selected

disciplines. If electing to tackle environmental issues for this project, at least three new sources must be provided.

3. Students will analyze and synthesize their findings, identifying common themes, patterns, and implications for addressing the chosen problem or question from an interdisciplinary perspective.
4. Students will individually develop a final project report that outlines their research process, key findings, and recommendations, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of their approach.

Deliverables:

- A written capstone synthesis project report, including an introduction to the problem or question, a review of relevant literature, research methodology, findings, and recommendations.
- An oral presentation of the capstone project, highlighting the interdisciplinary synthesis process and discussing the implications of the findings for addressing real-world challenges.

Select a textbook in your field:

Select one book from the following list that is close to your major, minor, or one of your BMS concentrations. You will use it as the foundation for your team assignments. Feel free to propose other books.

Communication

Inches, Susan. *Advocating for the Environment: How to Gather Your Power and Take Action*. 1st ed. New York: North Atlantic Books, 2021.

Business

Keefe, Bob. *Climate Nomics: Washington, Wall Street, and the Economic Battle to Save Our Planet*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022.

Education

Worth, Katie. *Miseducation: How Climate Change Is Taught in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022.

Environmental Science

Davidson, Eric A. *Science for a Green New Deal: Connecting Climate, Economics, and Social Justice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022.

Gender and Women Studies

Gianturco, Paola, and Avery Sangster. *Cool: Women Leaders Reversing Global Warming*. New York: Powerhouse Books, 2022.

History

Rawson, Michael. *The Nature of Tomorrow: A History of the Environmental Future*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021.

Labor Studies/Sociology

Calhoun, Craig, and Benjamin Y. Fong, eds. *The Green New Deal and the Future of Work*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022.

Ethnic Studies

Bitsóí, Alastair Lee, and Brooke Larsen, eds. *New World Coming: Frontline Voices on Pandemics, Uprisings, and Climate Crisis*. Salt Lake City: Torrey House Press, 2021.

Philosophy

Shue, Henry. *The Pivotal Generation: Why We Have a Moral Responsibility to Slow Climate Change Right Now*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022.

Rhetorics

Barnett, Joshua Trey. *Mourning in the Anthropocene: Ecological Grief and Earthly Coexistence*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2022.

Religious Studies

Beal, Timothy. *When Time Is Short: Finding Our Way in the Anthropocene*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2022.

Zoology

Ohlson, Kristin. *Sweet in Tooth and Claw: Stories of Generosity and Cooperation in the Natural World*. Ventura: Patagonia Books, 2022

Reading schedule

Read the introduction to every chapter of *Environment* as scheduled. Then, select at least one additional section in the chapter for further reading. I am sure you will want to read the entire chapter, as the book offers a wealth of information in a very accessible language. Additionally, plan on completing the reading of the book(s) you selected to cover your academic field(s), by the end of module 7 and report your findings in our discussion forum.

Module 1:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Overture, Why Environmental Studies, and Climate Shock. Pages 1 - 11. Additionally, Part One, Concepts and Case Studies, sections 1 and 2.

Activities: Interdisciplinary dialogue forum entries.

Module 2:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part One, Concepts and Case Studies, sections 3 and 4.

Activities: Interdisciplinary dialogue forum entries.

Module 3:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part One, Concepts and Case Studies, sections 5 and 6.

Activities: Interdisciplinary dialogue forum entries.

Module 4:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part One, Concepts and Case Studies, sections 7 and 8.

Activity: Reflective essay on interdisciplinary dialogue forum.

Module 5:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part One, Concepts and Case Studies, sections 9 and 10.

Activities: Cross-Disciplinary project proposal forum entries.

Module 6:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Biological Interactions, sections 11 and 12.

Activities: Cross-Disciplinary project proposal forum entries.

Module 7:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, sections 12 and 13.

Activities: Cross-Disciplinary project proposal forum entries.

Module 8:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Biological Interactions, sections 14 and 15.

Activities: Cross-Disciplinary project proposal forum entries.

Module 9:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Human Dimensions, sections 16 and 17.

Activities: Team project proposal submission and oral presentation.

Module 10:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Human Dimensions, sections 18, 19 and 20.

Activities: Interdisciplinary dialogue forum entries, supporting individual projects.

Module 11:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Social Connections, sections 21 and 22.

Activities: Interdisciplinary dialogue forum entries, supporting individual projects.

Module 12:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Social Connections, sections 23 and 24.

Activities: Interdisciplinary dialogue forum entries, team feedback for individual projects.

Module 13:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. Part Two, Concepts and Case Studies, Social Connections, section 25 and 26.

Activities: Submission of first draft of individual project and peer review.

Module 14:

Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology. CODA. 26: Conviction and Action.

Activities: Submission of second draft of individual project and peer review.

Module 15:

Final individual project submission and final reflection on interdisciplinary dialogue forum.

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

APPROVAL PAGE

Proposal Title: BMS CURRICULUM CHANGE

College: LIBERAL ARTS

Department: COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

DEPARTMENT CHAIR- SELFA A. CHEW-MELENDZ

I have read the enclosed proposal and approve this proposal on behalf of the department.

Signature

Date

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR – SELFA A. CHEW-MELENDZ

I have read the enclosed documents and approve the proposal on behalf of the college curriculum committee.

Signature

Date

COLLEGE DEAN – ANADELI BENCOMO

I have read the enclosed documents and approve the proposal on behalf of the college. I certify that the necessary funds will be allocated by the college in support of this proposal.

Signature

Date