

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

Faculty Office Building (Bldg. 47), Room 28  
Phone: 805.756.1205  
<https://isla.calpoly.edu>  
<https://sts.calpoly.edu>

ISLA & STS Director: Richard Besel

## Academic Programs

Program name	Program type
Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology	Minor
Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology	Minor
Media Arts, Society and Technology	Minor
Science and Risk Communication	Minor

The Program offers interdisciplinary and international classes in a wide variety of subject areas, from applied practice in media arts and technologies; to the study of social, cultural, political, and ethical issues involved in science and technology; to courses that examine world cultures. Many ISLA classes satisfy University general education and breadth requirements.

ISLA also offers four interdisciplinary Science, Technology and Society (STS) minors: Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology; Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology; Media Arts, Society and Technology and Science and Risk Communication. These STS minors are available to students throughout the University, regardless of their technical backgrounds.

## Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology Minor

The Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology (EPPST) minor enables students to understand the complexities of contemporary science and technology policies as they relate to the broader public, ethical theories and applications, and personal and societal values; appreciate the historical influences on existing policies and practices; evaluate current policies; and assess the potential outcomes of proposed policy changes. A broad range of elective courses provides students with the opportunity to customize the EPPST minor to their particular interests, allowing them to pursue further knowledge in a focused subject area—such as biotechnology, sustainability and the environment, genetic engineering, health, development, agriculture, and the technologies of war. Students completing the EPPST minor will gain important skills for creating, proposing, promoting, and evaluating policies that respond to the profound challenges and choices we face related to science and technology in the 21st century at local, national, and international levels. The EPPST minor is not open to students who have declared a minor in one of the other STS minors: Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology (GRCST); Media Arts, Society and Technology (MAST); and Science and Risk Communication (SRC).

## Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology Minor

The Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology (GRCST) minor provides students with the opportunity to explore and analyze the historical and contemporary relationships between gender, race, culture, science, technology, and medicine in local, national, and transnational contexts. Utilizing feminist and critical race approaches from the fields of gender and ethnic studies, the GRCST minor examines the role of cultural, ethical, social, political, and economic factors in determining the norms, values and meanings of scientific, technological, and medical practices, with an emphasis on the ways in which the production and applications of science, technology, and medicine shape and are shaped by knowledge and beliefs about gender, race, class, and sexuality. Students completing the GRCST minor will gain important intellectual and practical skills for creating, enacting, and evaluating efforts to create more socially just, equitable, and inclusive science, technology, and medicine in an increasingly diverse and globalized world. The GRCST minor is not open to students who have declared a minor in one of the other STS minors: Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology (EPPST); Media Arts, Society and Technology (MAST); and Science and Risk Communication (SRC).

## Media Arts, Society and Technology Minor

The Media Arts, Society and Technology (MAST) minor encourages students to explore the ways in which the media arts are enabled and shaped by progress in science and technology while also being uniquely situated to promote engagement with and critical reflection about the meanings of scientific, technical, and social progress. Throughout the MAST minor, students are provided with the opportunity to develop and refine their expertise in the creative, visual, communicative, and performing arts, such as film, video, still photography, sound design, stage and lighting design, computer graphics, and interactive entertainment. Through hands-on projects and explorations of media history and theory, students completing the MAST minor will develop and apply knowledge and skills in conceptual and critical thinking, media literacy, teamwork, leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration, and project management, and will be prepared to function as both cultural commentators and creators positioned to address and respond to the profound challenges and choices we face in the 21st century. The MAST minor is not open to students who have declared a minor in one of the other STS minors: Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology (EPPST); Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology (GRCST); and Science and Risk Communication (SRC).

## Science and Risk Communication Minor

The Science and Risk Communication (SRC) minor enables students to investigate how individuals and societies create, disseminate, maintain, and challenge perceptions of science, technology, and risk in multiple contexts. The minor focuses on key debates and controversies involving science and technology, public understandings and misunderstandings of scientific and technical expertise, industry-public relations, cultures of regulation and compliance, hazards, uncertainties, crisis management, and the politics of evidence. Through hands-on projects, SRC students will develop and practice specific skills for communicating about science, technology, and risk to various audiences across multiple media formats. A broad range of elective courses allows students to customize the SRC minor to their particular interests, enabling them to pursue

knowledge in a focused subject area or further refine communication production skills. Students completing the SRC minor will be prepared to understand, engage with, respond to, and communicate about the profound challenges and choices we face related to science, technology, and risk in the 21st century. The SRC minor is not open to students who have declared a minor in one of the other STS minors: Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology (EPPST); Gender, Race, Culture, Science and Technology (GRCST); and Media Arts, Society and Technology (MAST).

## ISLA Courses

### ISLA 123. Introduction to Science, Technology & Society. 4 units

Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP

Introductory exploration of science, technology, and society relationships from interdisciplinary perspectives in the arts, communications, humanities, and social sciences. Topic areas include ethics and public policy; gender, race and culture; media arts and society; science and risk communication. 4 lectures.

### ISLA 240. Introduction to Media Arts and Technologies. 4 units

Term Typically Offered: F, SP

Prerequisite: Completion of GE C3. Recommended: TH 210.

The intimate connection between the desire for artistic expression and current technologies that can assist that expression. Examination of technologies for theater, sound, cinema, gaming, and embodied media. Guest speakers with expertise. 4 lectures.

### ISLA 303. Values and Technology. 4 units

GE Area C4

Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; and one course from GE Area C.

Humanistic investigation into the theoretical and practical applications of technology with specific reference to the social effects of technological change. For all majors. Non-technical. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as HNRS 304/ISLA 303. Fulfills GE C4.

### ISLA 305. Topics in Public Engagements with STEM. 4 units

GE Area F

Term Typically Offered: W

Prerequisite: Junior standing and completion of GE Area B.

Recommended: ISLA 123.

Exploration of contemporary issues in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), with an emphasis on public understandings of and engagements with STEM research and teaching cultures. The Schedule of Classes will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area F.

### ISLA 315. Critical Issues in Latin American Studies. 4 units

GE Area D5

Term Typically Offered: TBD

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; and one course in lower division GE Area D. Recommended: GE Area D2 or D3.

An interdisciplinary approach to selected topics and issues that address how social, economic, political, and cultural forces have shaped the challenges that face contemporary Latin America. Descriptive subtitles assigned to each course. The Schedule of Classes will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE D5.

### ISLA 316. London: From Roman Colony to World Capital. 4 units

GE Area D5

Term Typically Offered: SU

Prerequisite: Junior standing; enrollment in London Study; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; completion of one course in GE Area D. Corequisite: Enrollment in ISLA 319.

Selective examination of the historical and cultural legacy of London within the development of Western civilization as well as its influence on the submission and eventual emergence of the non-Western world in the twentieth century. An analytical and interpretive study of how London shaped the social, economic, political and legal institutions of Western society. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE D5.

### ISLA 319. London Activities. 2 units

CR/NC

Term Typically Offered: SU

Prerequisite: Enrollment in London Study program.

Analytical and interpretive survey of the principal center of the English speaking world. The development of London from Roman administrative capital to modern cultural, financial and political colossus. Credit/No Credit grading only. 2 activities.

### ISLA 320. Topics and Issues in Values, Media and Culture. 4 units

GE Area C4

Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; and completion of one of the following: GE Area C1, C2 or C3.

Recommended: Completion of GE Area C1 or C3.

The interplay of values, media, and culture from an interdisciplinary perspective. Descriptive subtitles assigned to each course. The Schedule of Classes will list topic selected. 4 lectures. Total credit limited to 8 units with different subtopic; repeatable in same term. Crosslisted as HNRS/ISLA 320. Fulfills GE C4.

### ISLA 330. Cal Poly Land: Nature, Technology, and Society. 4 units

GE Area F

Term Typically Offered: SP

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area B.

Scientific investigation of the natural features of the Cal Poly landscape and their transformations by land management technology. Analysis of the environmental, economic, social, and political effects of agriculture, resource extraction, and construction technology on that landscape. Emphasis on the educational, land-use, and long term planning issues of technology presented by this case study. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as AG/ISLA/UNIV 330. Fulfills GE Area F.

### ISLA 340. Media Arts and Technologies: Storytelling. 4 units

Term Typically Offered: F, W, SP

Prerequisite: ISLA 240 or the completion of an ART or TH course in GE Area C3.

Creation of expressive technology-based pre-production works for standard television and film presentation to interactive technological environments. Pre-production script work, storyboarding, flow chart design, collaborative story creation, audience testing, and basic animatic construction. Visiting professionals work with students directly in collaborative workshops. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

**ISLA 341. Media Arts and Technologies: Cinematic Process. 4 units**

Term Typically Offered: W, SP

Prerequisite: ISLA 340.

Cinematic production including adapting a narrative for different presentation formats, storyboarding, lighting, sound recording, cinematography and editing. Production of short works designed as foundational pieces that can be built upon individually or in teams in independent study. Visiting professionals run collaborative production workshops. 2 lectures, 2 activities.

**ISLA 350. The Global Environment. 4 units**

GE Area F

Term Typically Offered: W

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; and completion of GE Area B.

Interdisciplinary investigation of how human activities impact the Earth's environment on a global scale. Examination of population, resource use, climate change, and biodiversity from scientific/technical and social/economic/historical/political perspectives. Use of remote sensing maps. Sustainable solutions. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as AG/EDES/ENGR/GEOG/ISLA/SCM/UNIV 350. Fulfills GE Area F.

**ISLA 393. Action-oriented Ethnography. 4 units**

Term Typically Offered: SP

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better; completion of GE Area D3; and one of the following: ANT 201, ANT 202, ANT 250, ISLA 123, any ES course, or any WGS course.

Development of knowledge and skills needed to conduct original action-oriented ethnographic research. Grounded in the reflexive 'turn' in anthropology and critical race, science, technology and society, queer and feminist studies, students will engage questions of authority, representation, critical consciousness and justice. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as ANT/ISLA 393.

**ISLA 400. Independent Study Project. 1-4 units**

Term Typically Offered: TBD

Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing and consent of instructor.

Independent study project focusing more than one discipline on a problem of study related to the liberal arts. May involve travel and/or independent research. Bibliography and study plan submitted in advance. Total credit limited to 8 units.

**ISLA 450. Summer Internship in London. 12 units**

CR/NC

Term Typically Offered: TBD

Prerequisite: Junior standing and consent of the Director of London Study.

Extensive work experience in London. Administration, orientation, and supervision of independent work by the service provider. Intensive two-week orientation, eight-week full-time work assignment. Evaluation by instructor, internship supervisor, and employer. Credit/No Credit grading only. 4 lectures, 8 units of independent study.

**ISLA 456. Advanced Project-Based Learning in Science, Technology & Society. 4 units**

Term Typically Offered: W, SP

Prerequisite: ISLA 123; completion of GE area A with a grade of C- or better; completion of GE Area B2 or B3; Junior standing; minor in one of the following: Ethics, Public Policy, Science and Technology; Gender, Race, Culture, Science, and Technology; Media Arts, Society and Technology; or Science and Risk Communication.

Develop, maintain and lead teams in a project investigating complex multi-disciplinary issues in science, technology and society. Integrate knowledge across the minors. 2 lectures, 2 activities.

**ISLA 470. Selected Advanced Topics. 2-4 units**

Term Typically Offered: TBD

Prerequisite: Junior standing; and completion of GE Area A with a grade of C- or better.

Focused interdisciplinary study of an issue impacting or impacted by the liberal arts, combining the insight and expertise of more than one of the liberal arts disciplines, especially as they interface with the sciences and technology and/or international studies in a study abroad setting. The Schedule of Classes will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units; repeatable in same term. 2-4 lectures.