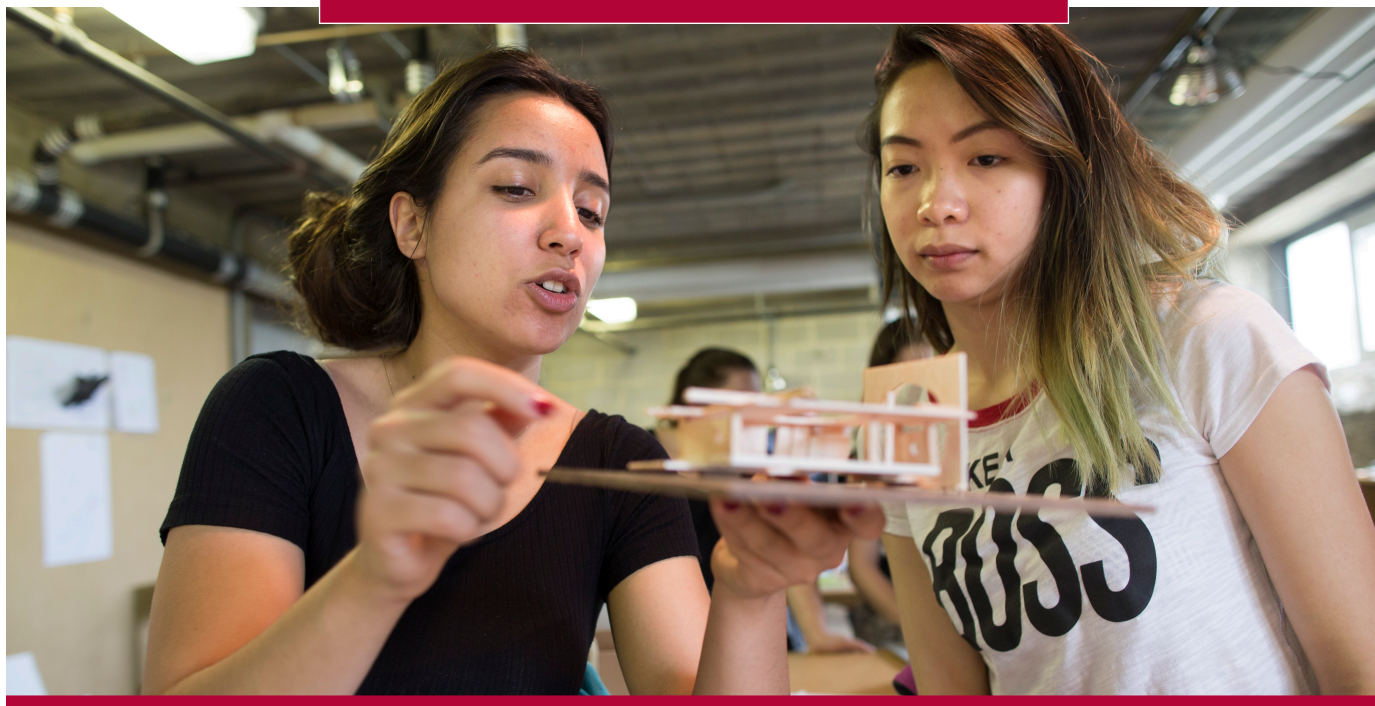**Swarthmore encourages an interdisciplinary approach to learning that inspires students to think outside the box. It's only fitting, then, that our students can pursue studies beyond the traditional majors, by customizing a major all their own.**

Our "Design Your Own Major" program allows students to hone their interests, preparing them for specialized work in graduate school or their careers. Special majors typically require 10–12 courses that, when considered holistically, provide a student with a rich, cohesive, and comprehensive understanding of their chosen topic—from gender and digital culture to circus arts.

Like traditional majors, Design Your Own Majors must complete a comprehensive requirement to graduate. This requirement may be fulfilled by a thesis, comprehensive examination, or other project approved by the student's faculty adviser.

> "My thesis was a scholarly jumping-off point to what I imagine I'll be doing for the rest of my life."
> — Daniel Hirschel-Burns '14, political conflict major, Yale Ph.D. candidate in comparative politics

Grace Dumdaw '21
Entertainment production major from New Orleans, La.

"I've always been a performer in one way or another, and I'm trying to combine theater, film & media studies, and art to give me a foundation for producing my own works of performance art."

ABOUT OUR SPECIAL MAJORS

- In some areas—such as astrophysics, biochemistry, chemical physics, language and linguistics, and neuroscience—curricula are already in place, developed by previous students and supported by the faculty.

- In other cases, students, working with their faculty mentors, take the initiative to define their own distinct academic program.

- Examples of individualized programs of study include majors in ethnomusicology, health and social policy, medical anthropology, and technology and the human experience.

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swarthmore.edu/academics/design-your-own-major

INTERNSHIP, RESEARCH, AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Swarthmore's Career Services office and other on-campus resources, generous financial assistance, and expansive alumni network allow students to connect with experts worldwide to pursue their passions.

- The **Summer Research and Opportunities Program** awards stipends of $4,800 for student internships, engaged scholarship, or other work leading to preparation of a thesis or major project.

- Our job-shadowing **Extern Program** partners students with Swarthmore alumni or other professionals for a weeklong glimpse into their careers.

- **Engaged scholarship** pairs students with faculty members for research opportunities that benefit the broader community.

- **On-campus recruiting**, **career fairs**, and **networking events** set students up for success beyond their Swarthmore years.

ALUMNI PATHS

The postgraduate stories of our "Design Your Own Major" alumni are as varied as the subjects they studied—from specialized work at top graduate schools to standout positions in art, medicine, business, technology, law, and other fields. Recent examples have included:

- **Theories of Decision-Making:** Ph.D., Behavioral Science, University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Chicago, Ill.

- **Psychobiology:** Neurologist, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora, Colo.

- **Health Care Management, Economics & Policy:** Ph.D., Health Policy, Harvard/MIT, Boston, Mass.

- **Middle Eastern Studies:** Curatorial Assistant, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE

WHY DESIGN YOUR OWN MAJOR?

Our alumni share their thoughts on their special majors:

"I love the liberal arts, and looking at architecture from an art perspective has been enriching. Each class and experience pointed me in the new direction I finally chose."
—Kelsey Rico '16
special major in architectural design

"It gave me the opportunity to look at circus academically."
—Jackie Morgen Nager '13
special major in circus arts and biology

"I became absolutely fascinated with studying how people work in groups since essentially everything we do as humans involves some sort of collaborative effort."
—Eliana Cohen '17
special major in organizational behavior

"I was born and raised in Philly and have always had a love for cities, maps, and the built environment [and] created an interdisciplinary special major in urban studies at the end of my freshman year."
—Steven Gu '15
special major in urban studies

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