

SCIENCE IN SOCIETY MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The major consists of three components: courses offered within the Science in Society Program (SISP) in the history, philosophy, and social studies of the sciences, medicine, and technology; at least two years of coursework in a single scientific discipline; and an area of concentration to provide depth in a related discipline. Students can either complete their area of concentration in anthropology, FGSS, history, philosophy, religion, or sociology, or they can concentrate in a scientific discipline by completing a major in that science as part of their SISP major (the first two years of the science major satisfy the SISP science requirement).

First- and second-year students interested in the Science in Society Program should begin their science courses as soon as possible. Most students take their first course in the program as a sophomore. The core courses in the history of science or sociocultural studies of science are especially recommended as first courses in the program.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Students who declare their major in SISP must specify the fields in which they plan to complete their science requirement and their area of concentration. Students who seek to add the major after their sophomore year will only be admitted after review to ensure that they are in a good position to complete the major. All students who declare the major must submit a statement of their goals in the major, for advising purposes, and for later evaluation of how well those goals were met. There are no other requirements for admission to the major.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Students may enroll in the program either as a stand-alone major or as a joint major with one of the science departments (astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth and environmental sciences, molecular biology and biochemistry, neuroscience and behavior, physics, or psychology). All students must take one course each in history of science, philosophy of science, and sociocultural studies of science, along with three additional courses in the program (including at least one 300-level seminar). Students for whom the program is a stand-alone major must also take a minimum of four major-track courses in one of the science departments and a structured three-course area of concentration in either anthropology, FGSS, history, philosophy, religion, or sociology. Students who undertake the joint major with a science must complete all requirements for a science major in place of the area of concentration. Further information about program requirements, policies, and its learning goals can be found at wesleyan.edu/sisp (<http://wesleyan.edu/sisp/>).

Neither thesis tutorials nor independent tutorials can count toward the six courses in the program that are part of the major requirements. The required courses provide indispensable background for undertaking independent projects. Students considering writing a thesis are encouraged to be well along with the core major requirements before beginning the thesis as first-semester seniors.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The faculty of the Science in Society Program have approved the following list of learning goals for all students undertaking the major in science in society:

- **Scientific competence:** Competence beyond the major-track introductory level in a scientific discipline, indicated by students' performance in appropriate courses in that science;
- **Core competence in science studies:** Improved understanding of the sciences and/or medicine as historically developing, socially and culturally situated practices of inquiry and conceptual understanding; that understanding should have both multidisciplinary breadth and greater depth within a particular disciplinary area of concentration.
- **Disciplinary depth:** Those students whose area of concentration is in a discipline that incorporates the sciences and medicine as objects of inquiry should improve their understanding of how that discipline conceives and approaches the sciences and/or medicine and how its approach connects to other ways of understanding the sciences and medicine; those students whose area of concentration is fulfilled by a second major in a scientific discipline should improve their understanding of how practices and achievements of that science are historically, culturally, and philosophically situated and how their scientific understanding and their core competence in science studies can be mutually informative.
- **Scientific contextualization:** Improved skills for engaging their scientific understanding in relevant ways with specific issues or concerns of broader social, cultural, political, and/or philosophical significance and for acquiring and assessing relevant technical background for such issues that go beyond their prior scientific training.

STUDY ABROAD

Many SISP students go abroad for a semester as a junior. Students can normally count only one course from study abroad toward the six required courses in SISP, although some students also get credit for science courses or toward their area of concentration.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Courses may be transferred from other institutions to replace one of the science in society requirements, but we review these requests very stringently, and we only accept courses clearly equivalent in level and field to courses we would accept at Wesleyan.

HONORS

To be eligible for departmental honors, a student must meet two criteria. First, all work done in the core courses of the Science in Society Program, including electives, must be considered, on average, to be very good (equivalent to a B+ or better). Second, a senior thesis deemed excellent by its readers is necessary for honors, and a genuinely distinguished thesis is needed for high honors.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The Science in Society Program offers three options for students seeking a senior capstone experience for their work in the major:

- All students are required to take one or more **300**-level seminars in the program. These courses, on a wide range of topics, each with a term paper or other independent research component, provide many opportunities for what can become capstone projects, and students are encouraged to choose their seminar courses and their research topics in those courses with this possibility in mind.
- Students with a suitable topic and faculty sponsor have an option of writing a senior thesis, which can lead to departmental honors for those eligible. Students interested in undertaking a thesis will be expected to submit a thesis prospectus in the spring semester of their junior year. For further information on this option, see wesleyan.edu/sisp/for_majors/honors_thesis.html (http://wesleyan.edu/sisp/for_majors/honors_thesis.html).