

## Major Declaration

Each year there are many students who struggle over the decision about their major. Some feel that choosing just one major will narrow or close off all other options. Some place too much significance on how the decision will impact their career or job choices in the future. Many who have been through college and are successful and feel fulfilled in their careers will tell you that there is no direct relationship between one's major and career. With very few exceptions, engineering being one of them, rarely will the factual knowledge you gain within a particular discipline affect your career or job options after college. Therefore, you should allow the decision about your major to develop organically from the courses you find yourself enjoying most, not only in terms of the content of the materials covered in the courses, but also the methodology or approach to learning the discipline requires. It's the transferable skills that you acquire no matter what major you pursue and how you articulate and apply them to the professional context that are of most interest to employers and graduate schools. So take the time to explore over your first two years by sampling the many courses available to you at Barnard College and Columbia University.

You may find the perspective of a fellow student on the major decision published in a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: <http://chronicle.com/article/Stop-Asking-Me-My-Major/63453/>; and an article by the president of a small liberal arts college about the value of a liberal arts degree even during difficult economic times: <http://chronicle.com/article/7-Major-Misperceptions-About/64363/> helpful to you.

## Major Declaration Procedures

Print a major declaration form from the [Registrar Office's website](#)

Meet with your current adviser to review your degree progress and satisfaction of general education requirements. Most sophomores find this meeting quite satisfying. It shows you where you are at the midpoint in your undergraduate career and allows you to have any final questions answered by your original adviser. At the end of this meeting, your adviser will sign off on the form.

Bring your form to obtain the signature of the relevant department chair for the academic area of interest.

File completed form with the Office of the Registrar.

## Special or Combined Major

It is usually in your best interest to select an institutional major, which provides affiliation with a department or a community of peer learners. However, if you are interested in developing a special or combined major, you will need to speak with your class dean who will provide an application form and help you clarify your interest and identify Barnard faculty members who might be appropriate serving as your major adviser(s). A major adviser for a special major should be chosen from the academic departments that are represented prominently; for a combined major, two advisers must be chosen, one from each of the two departments. A proposal for a special or combined major must demonstrate **breadth** (adequate coverage within a field), **depth** (sufficiently advanced coverage), and **coherence** (evidence of the intellectual integrity of the major). The Committee on Programs and Academic Standing must approve the special or combined major.