# Minor in Design Studies

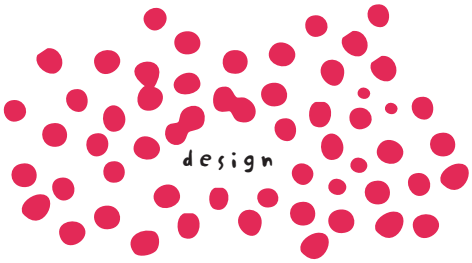
**Interdisciplinary Minor** | 18 credits

**Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences**

**Boston College**

# Why Design Studies?

In today's rapidly changing world, the ability to **think critically, creatively solve complex problems, and collaborate effectively** is an invaluable asset. At Boston College, design is not just a set of creative tools, but a transformative educational approach that fosters these essential skills while nurturing personal growth. At the heart of BC Design Studies is design thinking, a powerful, human-centered approach to innovation and problem-solving.




## In your minor, you'll build

- **Human-centered problem-solving methodologies**
- **Design-driven concepts from ideation to prototype**
- **Ethical and systems frameworks to address implementation**
- **Storytelling strategies for conveying complex ideas with purpose**

# Design Studies Minor

## Overview

**The 18-credit interdisciplinary Minor in Design Studies** provides undergraduate students with a structured exploration of human-centered design principles and practices. Through a blend of required core courses and approved electives from across the university, students learn to identify unmet needs, frame complex problems, and research diverse contexts. The curriculum empowers students to ideate creatively, prototype solutions, test iteratively, and communicate their impact effectively.

By emphasizing collaboration, ethical considerations, and systems thinking, the program bridges Boston College's liberal arts tradition with hands-on, project-based learning. Our goal is to develop reflective practitioners capable of applying design methodologies to drive innovation and create positive social impact across diverse fields.

**To learn more, contact the Director:**
Carissa Henriques, Associate Professor of the Practice and Director of Design Studies,
henrica@bc.edu.

### ELIGIBILITY + APPLICATION

**Prerequisites:** Prior to applying, students must have completed or be currently enrolled in one of the Foundation-level courses.

**Advanced Coursework:** Registration for Advanced-level courses requires permission and is available only after completing 9 credits in the minor (including the Intermediate-level course option).

**To be eligible to apply for entry to the Design Studies Minor, students must:**

- Be a Freshman or Sophomore in good academic standing*
- Have completed or be enrolled in at least one of the Foundational design courses in the list
- Complete the online application

**Students may declare in their junior year if they have already taken (or are enrolled in) 9 credits of eligible design studies coursework.*

**Students may apply** to the minor using the online application. Applications are due by April 20.

### APPLY NOW

**URL**
**https://forms.gle/ykQ8PyCBEfuLNi948**

# Design Studies Minor

**18 credits***

** 15 credits must be unique to the minor and not counted for other major/minor requirements.*

## Course Checklist

**To be eligible for the minor, students must have completed one Foundation course [or] be currently enrolled in a Foundation course, as well as be in good academic standing.**

**PICK ONE COURSE**
**3 CREDITS REQUIRED**

### 1 FOUNDATION

Foundation level courses offer an introduction into design thinking and human-centered design concepts, design-driven problem-solving processes, and opportunities for prototyping.

- ○ UNAS 1025 / ENGR 1025 / ARTS 1125 Innovation Through Design Thinking, 3 cr.
- ○ ENGR 1026 Innovation through Engineering Design, 3 cr.
- ○ ENGR 1801 Making the Modern World: Design, Ethics, and Engineering, 3 cr.

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**PICK ONE COURSE***
**3 CREDITS REQUIRED**

### 2 INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate level courses expand and deepen student thinking, problem solving methods, and prototyping skills, balancing research and hands-on making.

- ○ ENGR 1101 Introduction to Human Centered Engineering, 3 cr.
- ○ UNAS 2175 / BZAN 2175 Physical Computing - Interactive Art, Robotics, and Tech for Good, 3 cr.
- ○ UNAS 2205 Information and Communication Design, 3 cr.
- ○ UNAS / ARTS 2300 Interaction Design, 3 cr.
- ○ UNAS 2301 Design Research Methods and Implementation, 3 cr.

**Students may take more than one course in this category, utilizing additional courses as electives.*

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**PICK ONE COURSE***
**3 CREDITS REQUIRED**

**Your Advanced level course may only be taken once 9 credits of the minor are completed (1 Foundation, 1 Intermediate and 1 elective)**

### 3 ADVANCED

Advanced level courses are project-based, functionally serving as a capstone for the minor. When possible, the Advanced-level course should be taken last in the course sequence, and they are registered by instructor permission.

- ○ UNAS 4301 Applied Design for the Common Good, 3 cr.
- ○ UNAS 3309 Advanced Visual Storytelling and Information Design, 3 cr.
- ○ UNAS 4302 Design Thinking and Implementation Science Project, 3 cr. (directed independent study)

# Design Studies Minor

## Course Checklist

**18 credits***

** 15 credits must be unique to the minor and not counted for other major/minor requirements.*

**PICK THREE COURSES**
**9 CREDITS REQUIRED**



## ELECTIVES

Elective courses span departments across the university, enabling students to construct their unique course path through design-driven courses.

- ◯ UNCP 4604 Ethical Design for Social Impact, 3 cr.
- ◯ FORM 6150/CSCI2265 Tech Tools for Playful Learning, 3 cr.
- ◯ UNAS 3307 Design for Impact, 3 cr.
- ◯ ARTS / BSLW 2207 Urban Design for Complexity and Sustainability, 3 cr.
- ◯ BSLW 2208 / ECON 1208: Urban Action Lab, 3 cr.
- ◯ ARTS 2310 Sustainable Futures by Design (study abroad, ARTS Core), 3 cr.
- ◯ ARTS 1156 Imagemaking with Photoshop and Illustrator, 3 cr.
- ◯ ARTS 2252 Architectural Design 1 *(only offered in fall semester)*, 3 cr.
- ◯ ARTS 2250 Graphic Design 1 *(ARTS 1156 pre-req)*, 3 cr.
- ◯ ARTS 3335 Designing Space: Rhino 3-D *(ARTS 1156 pre-req)*, 3 cr.
- ◯ MGMT 2143 Idea Work: Making Things That Matter, 3 cr.
- ◯ MGMT 2144 Design-Driven Innovation Consulting, 3 cr.
- ◯ MGMT2139 Social Impact and Entrepreneurship, 3 cr.

# Design Studies Minor

## Spring 2027 Course Offerings

**FOUNDATION**

### UNAS 1025 / ARTS1125 / ENGR 1025 Innovation through Design Thinking

Would you like to be innovative in whatever you pursue? Innovation is about solving important and complex problems to create value for the greater good. Innovating through design thinking is a structured, human-centered process for creatively solving problems, which can be adopted by anyone. In this foundational course we will introduce the mindset, process and methods at the core of design thinking. Students will see inspiring case studies, hear from cutting edge practitioners, and work on a project to internalize this learning. Students will discover design thinking is a practical toolkit that helps them reliably innovate in the face of changing social needs, business disruptions, and technology shifts.

**Course Details:**

T / Th 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM, Hayden Hall
T / Th 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM, Service Building

**INTERMEDIATE**

### UNAS2301 Design Research Methods and Implementation

How do insights drive impact? This undergraduate course explores how design research supports the implementation of ideas within real-world systems such as organizations, communities, and services. Students learn human-centered research approaches including ethnographic research, co-design, and participatory design methods to understand peoples experiences and needs in context, and work collaboratively to translate insights into ideas that can be tested, adapted, and implemented in practice. Emphasis is placed on qualitative research, shared inquiry, and reflective practice, and on how systems, constraints, and coordination shape feasibility, ethics, and impact across education, healthcare, technology, policy, and community settings. Prerequisite: (UNAS1025 or ARTS1125 or ENGR1025) or ENGR1801 or HIST1627 or ENGR1026).

**Course Details:**

M / W 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM, Hayden Hall

**INTERMEDIATE**

### UNAS 2300 / ARTS 2300 Interaction Design

*ARTS 1156 Imagemaking with Photoshop and Illustrator is a prerequisite for this course.*

This course is an introduction to the design and development of interactive media, artifacts, products, and services. Interaction design dynamically combines a number of disciplines, including art, engineering, design, and social science in order to understand and create meaningful and engaging experiences for people. Topics include aesthetics, design ethics, user-experience and user interface design, sustainability, and human factors. Students will conduct research and work iteratively, utilizing sketching, prototyping, and fabrication as a means of refining their design and improving their craft as well as become familiar with industry-standard prototyping programs and applications through hands-on projects.

**Course Details:**

Th 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Hayden Hall

# Design Studies Minor

## Spring 2027 Course Offerings

**INTERMEDIATE** **ENGR 1101 Introduction to Human-Centered Engineering**

In this course, we will learn about and practice engineering methods to tackle design problems through a human-centered lens. These methods include introductory work with: mathematical models, statistics, physical prototyping, computer-aided design, decision-making approaches, and observation and interview techniques. We will learn how these methods can be employed while working on a design problem, including problem formulation, data analysis, design trade-offs, concept selection, and design deployment. At the end of this course, we will have a working understanding of how human-centered engineers think and work.

**Course Details:**

M / W 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM, Hayden Hall *(Lecture)*
F 10:00 AM – 11:50 AM, Hayden Hall *(Lab)*

M / W 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM, Hayden Hall *(Lecture)*
F 1:00 PM – 2:50 PM, Hayden Hall *(Lab)*

**INTERMEDIATE** **UNAS 2175 / BZAN 2175 Physical Computing - Interactive Art, Robotics, and Tech for Good**

Low-cost microcontrollers, sensors, and computing devices like the Raspberry Pi make it possible to create technical projects that humans can physically interact with. This course assumes no prior programming experience but will progress quickly through block-based MakeCode programming, then CircuitPython programming so that all students have coding knowledge necessary to create hardware projects. Students will purchase an amount of hardware and tools similar to the cost of books in a standard course, and we'll use these parts to build a series of projects that control lights, read sensors, produce sound, respond to touch and app control, capture camera images, and more. We'll also build a wheel-based robot, and students will have an opportunity to create and present several original projects and share their work with classmates. *This course was formerly numbered: ISYS2170.*

**Course Details:**

W 4:30 PM – 6:50 PM, Hayden Hall

# Design Studies Minor

## Spring 2027 Course Offerings

**ELECTIVES**

**UNCP 4604 Ethical Design for Social Impact, 3 cr.**
T / Th 4:30 PM – 5:45 PM, Hayden Hall

**FORM 6150 / CSCI 2265 Tech Tools for Playful Learning, 3 cr.**
Th 9:30 PM – 11:50 PM, Carney Hall

**BSLW 2208 / ECON 1208: Urban Action Lab, 3 cr.**
T 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Corcoran Center, Carney Hall

**ARTS 2310 Sustainable Futures by Design, 3 cr.** ***(summer study abroad, ARTS Core)***

**ARTS 1156 Imagemaking with Photoshop and Illustrator, 3 cr.**
W 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM, Devlin Hall
W 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Devlin Hall

**ARTS 2250 Graphic Design, 3 cr. (ARTS 1156 pre-req)**
T 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Devlin Hall

**ARTS 3335 Designing Space: Rhino 3-D, 3 cr. (ARTS 1156 or ARTS 2250 pre-req or permission of the instructor)**

**MGMT 2144 Design-Driven Innovation Consulting, 3 cr.**
M 4:30 PM – 6:50 PM, Fulton Hall

**MGMT 2139 Social Impact and Entrepreneurship, 3 cr.**
W 1:30 PM – 3:50 PM, Campion Hall