My grandfather used to tell me over and over again: Always know at least three ways to get to anywhere you need to go. I have kept these words in the back of my mind since I was a child and I’ve found that they apply to nearly everything in life, especially when it comes to education. I know that I want help close the health disparities between populations and promote well-being in communities. There is no direct path to making this happen, so I created a BIS program to make sure I get to where I need to go.

My grandparents on both my mother and father’s side of the family are first generation Americans. They valued education and hard work and had a great appreciation of culture. Traveling and learning about the world from people who lived differently from us was an essential part of our education and a way of keeping our lives in perspective.

My experiences traveling, combined with my schooling, helped give me an awareness of the diversity of cultures within my own country and in the world. These travels opened my eyes to the reality that, although not everyone practiced the same faith that my family did or ate the same food and had different ways of spending time together, they were so relatable at the same time. They enjoyed the sunshine and loved their close ones and wanted to laugh, just like I did. I wanted to learn more about why these regions had been portrayed as if they were so different than my own.

Not only did traveling lead to an awareness of the diversity of cultures, but it also revealed to me the injustices and inequalities that exist in the world. I saw the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and the old forgotten towns of the American West. I met self-reliant farmers in California, people without homes in Colorado, and immigrants from Mexico all trying to secure a stable life for themselves and their families while struggling with their own unique health
issues. I wanted to know why some people had access to healthcare than others and what I could do to help close the gap.

Whenever I came back to my hometown, I felt less and less at home. I felt apart from the people who had never had or taken the chance to leave what they’ve always known. I heard people talk about places they had never been to in inaccurate and hurtful ways. I learned about my privilege. I had to make a choice as to how to use that privilege, because I can never get rid of it. I wanted to build bridges between the world I went home to and the places I went to. Just going there wasn’t enough.

When I wasn’t traveling or studying, I was developing my skills as a storyteller. Inspired by poetic musicians like Bob Dylan and Conor Oberst and authors like John Steinbeck and Kurt Vonnegut, I began writing at a young age. I filled notebooks with poems and stories that blended the worlds I learned about in books and folk songs with my own experiences and those of people I had met. Writing became a contemplative practice that helped me navigate my existence in this world of inequality and confusion while building connections between myself of others that were not so unlike me. I was beginning to figure out a way to express myself and what I had learned from others.

I knew that I wanted to close gaps between people, both materially and socially. With my grandfather’s advice in mind, I crafted a multi-pronged approach to getting there by enrolling in the BIS program. I created a program that prepares me to take on some of the most drastic health problems in the world while learning about how inequalities are constructed and strengthening my skills as a storyteller to communicate the wholeness of the human race.

To do this I have created a BIS program with concentrations in Human Health & Wellness, Global Studies, and Digital Media. Human Health & Wellness allows me to explore
cultural understandings of health, research how health and health care vary across space, and
learn techniques to bring greater well being into communities as well as my own life. Global
Studies deepens my understanding of how the processes of globalization influence the lives of
people around the world and further developing my research and critical thinking skills. Digital
Media Studies gives me a well-rounded understanding of 21st century communication while
equipping me with practical skills and experience to effectively communicate in this digital age.
Together, these skills and bases of knowledge prepare me to help close the material and social
gaps between the world I grew up in and the rest of the world.

**Human Health and Wellness**

Human Health and Wellness provides a multidisciplinary, multicultural understanding of
health as an aspect of culture, a personal practice, and an institution. By examining the history of
medicine, various cultural attitudes towards health, and offering techniques to improve personal
and community health and wellbeing; this concentration supplies a historical, theoretical, and
practical knowledge base for understanding health and wellbeing.

My first exposure to this concentration was in CSPH3211: Living on Purpose. This
course can be thought of as a topics course for Health and Wellness, as *purpose* is one element of
human wellness. The concept of purpose was examined through theoretical and cultural ways of
knowing. During this course, I learned ways of investigating particular aspects of wellbeing
such as practice and reflection, reading scholarly articles, and critically interpreting cultural
media texts.

CSPH3201: Introducing Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction. This course offered both a
scholarly analysis of the effectiveness of mindfulness practices on human health, but also an
experiential understanding. In this course we learned and practiced a variety of mindfulness
techniques while reading about the many health benefits of practicing mindfulness. This course was not only personally beneficial, it deepened my knowledge of alternative health practices which I can inform others about in public health education settings.

CSPH3001: Introduction to Integrative Healing Practices. This course provided techniques for critically examining the validity of information about integrative practices, methods of designing research about integrative practices, and deepened my understanding of how integrative healing practices are perceived and practiced in the U.S. healthcare system. These skills allow me to critically navigate the variety of information about integrative health practices so that I can access and assess the most valid research possible and collect valid data on my own.

CSPH3101: Creating Ecosystems of Wellbeing. This course offered information, practices, and tools that I can use to incorporate wellbeing into systems such as my personal life, my community, and my workplace. This course examined theoretical models of systems thinking as well as practical skills for maintaining and cultivating wellbeing. It provided a knowledge and skill set that can be implemented into a variety of settings for an overall better experience.

GEOG3411W: Geography of Health. This course developed my research skills, deepened my knowledge of how health and healthcare vary spatially, and offered insight into various cultural perspectives and attitudes of health. Dimensions to the geographical study of health were explored along with critical analysis of scholarly research. This more concrete set of research skills incorporates a more scientific element to this concentration and adds a theme-specific set of research skills to my program.

CSPH5111: Ways of Thinking About Health offers theoretical, historical, and experiential ways of understanding health. While visiting cultural sites to learn about how health is
approached by those outside of the U.S. healthcare system, we compare attitudes, practices, and processes of health and well being across cultures. This course also offers the opportunity to assess my interpretations, assumptions, and reactions to “alternative” ways of thinking about and practicing health, which is an invaluable experience for someone interested in doing international health work. This will be one of my first immersive, reflective experiences of non-U.S. health.

**Digital Media Studies**

Digital Media Studies is a theoretical and practical understanding of the most recent media platforms. Digital Media has exploded over the past 20 years and is now considered to be the most common medium of communication. This concentration provides a deep understanding of the influence digital platforms have on communication, trends in successful digital communication methods and techniques, and offers practical skills that can be applied to future positions.

**Jour 4551: New Media and Culture** offers theoretical and historical frameworks for understanding how new (digital) media influences communication and culture. Scholarly analysis of information technologies, cultural change, and communication were critically examined. This course developed my critical thinking skills by making me examine the way that technologies and culture interact and influence one another. This course included two substantial research papers on cultural change and communication technologies.

**Jour 4272: Interactive Advertising** explored the ways in which advertising has adapted to the evolution of digital platforms through historical and theoretical approaches. Interactive advertising was critically assessed and practiced as a means of interactive advertising. This course offered a theoretical and practical understanding of digital advertising techniques and practices.
SCMC 3201: *Fundamentals of Digital Filmmaking* provided practical technical skills for digital content creation. This course was a hands-on, skill-focused course on visual storytelling with a digital medium. Methods of effective digital communication were analysed and then practiced. This course offered a foundation of digital communication skills that can be built upon and applied to nearly any setting.

SCMC 3202: *Intermediate Digital Filmmaking* built upon the skills developed in the preceding class, enhancing visual storytelling skills to be more clear, concise, and practical. Technical skills such as recording with digital camcorders and editing in Adobe Creative Suite were developed while building upon effective soft skills such as writing, planning, and time management.

ARTS:3601 *Making Art Interactive* provides practical, conceptual, and historical approaches to interactive media. Hard skills such as proficiency with Adobe Creative Suite are further developed. Interactivity is a central concept to this course, making it applicable to many future opportunities.

**Global Studies**

Perhaps the most interdisciplinary fields of Social Science, Global Studies promotes a complex understanding of history leading up to current events, political socio-economic phenomena, and culture. This field requires agile critical thinking skills, scholarly research in multiple disciplines, and cultural awareness.

GLOS 3144: *Knowledge, Power, and the Politics of Representation* provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the representation of regions of the world in contemporary discourse with political, cultural, and economic perspectives of history. This course outlined and analyzed how the representations of regions of the world are produced, piecing apart what makes up “the
global.” Ways of knowing were examined and personal reflection to our own assumptions were encouraged. This course mapped out how our views of certain regions of the world are formed through scholarly writing from the global scholarly community.

GLOS 3145: Global Modernity, the Nation-State, and Capitalism explores the notion of “modernity” from a multidisciplinary approach, examining the assumptions and production of knowledge in contemporary discourse within the United States. Sources of knowledge and narratives of history were critically analyzed and debated. Popular media and cultural texts were analyzed and critically assessed using theoretical frameworks from the international scholarly community. This course challenged the notion that modernity is a status to be achieved rather than a co-constitutive process of identity and status which adds another layer of cultural awareness and understanding to my program.

GLOS 3900: Ways of Knowing in Global Studies is a methodological overview of ways of collecting information, both qualitative and quantitative about social science issues. Techniques for conducting research were analyzed and theoretical concepts of understanding were discussed. Research skills such as proposal writing were developed. This course contributes a specific set of skills pertaining to research in social sciences to my program.

GLOS 3900: Supercapitalism: Labor, Consumption, Labor, and the Environment examined the processes of neoliberalization in a globalized context through theoretical, historical, and economic lenses. This course analyzed the global trend towards privatization through policy and Western hegemony, increasing my awareness to the impact of my culture on other regions of the world while deepening my critical thinking skills. This course explained the transformation of labor, consumption, and the environment; all of which relate to health. This knowledge will act
as a framework for understanding the socio-economic, cultural, and political situation in areas that I may end up working, making me a more educated and aware person.

GLOS 3921: *Europe: A Geographic Perspective* offered an introduction to methods of understanding the European continent in the field of geography. Discipline-based approaches to understanding the cultural, geological, demographic, etc. situation in Europe. Research skills were refined as knowledge about the continent was collected and analyzed in a comparative context.

**Conclusion**

Any major problem can be approached from multiple angles. My BIS program prepares me to approach the problem of health gaps from the foundations of knowledge and practical skills gained from my three concentrations: Human Health and Wellness, Digital Media, and Global Studies. This program gives me a theoretical understanding of the multi-cultural and holistic nature of health and wellbeing, while equipping me with the critical understanding of how knowledge and power are created and produced internationally, while also supplying effective communication skills in the digital age. Together, I can use these knowledge bases, skills, and tools to close the gaps between the world I grew up in and the world that exists beyond it.
### BIS/IDIM Program Course Worksheet

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<th>Name:</th>
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Total number of credits in proposed program: 
Total number 3/4/5xxx level credits in proposed program: **50**

Analytic Paper course: **GEOG 3411W**

Total credits in program left to complete:

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**Total number of credits in proposed program: 50**

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#### Global Studies

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<th><strong>JOUR 4272 Interactive Advertising</strong></th>
<th><strong>SCMC 3201 Digital Filmmaking I</strong></th>
<th><strong>SCMC 3202 Digital Filmmaking II</strong></th>
<th><strong>ARTS 3240 Making Art Interactive</strong></th>
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<th><strong>CSPH 3211 Living on Purpose</strong></th>
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<th><strong>CSPH 3001 Intro to Integrative Healing</strong></th>
<th><strong>CSPH 3101 Ecosystems of Well-Being</strong></th>
<th><strong>GEOG 3411W Geographies of Health</strong></th>
<th><strong>CSPH 5111 Ways of Thinking about Health</strong></th>
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**TOTALS:** 3/4/5xxx level credits in area: **15**

Total credits in area (IDIM only):