

## **REPORT ON HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS) CONCENTRATIONS**

May 9, 2019

### **Submitted by the CUP Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR)**

- Marah Gubar (Chair)
- Emma Bernstein (Undergraduate Representative)
- John Carroll (Sloan Representative)
- Aram Harrow (SoS Representative)
- Timothy Hyde (SA&P Representative)
- Charlotte Minsky (Undergraduate Representative)
- Emily Richmond Pollock (SHASS Representative)
- Agustin Rayo (Dean of SHASS Designate)
- Tamar Schapiro (Vice Chancellor Designate)
- Patricia Fernandes (Executive Officer to Subcommittee)
- Jason Donath (Staff to Subcommittee)
- Tom Scahill (Staff to Subcommittee)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### Executive Summary

---

#### **1.0 Introduction 1**

- 1.1 Background 3
  - 1.2 Methodology 4
- 

#### **2.0 Findings – Concentration Advisor Meetings 5**

- 2.1 Curriculum and Structure 5
  - 2.2 Staffing and Resources 7
  - 2.3 Advising Strategies, Responsibilities, and Goals 8
  - 2.4 Publicity 10
  - 2.5 Intellectual Communities 12
  - 2.6 Challenges 13
- 

#### **3.0 Findings – Student Survey 15**

- 3.1 Choice – How Students Decide on Concentrations 15
  - 3.2 Advising 16
  - 3.3 Intellectual Communities 17
- 

#### **4.0 Conclusion 18**

- 4.1 Essential Practices 19
  - 4.2 Best Practices 20
  - 4.3 Recommendations 23
- 

### Appendices

---

#### **Appendix A HASS Concentration Definition**

#### **Appendix B About the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR)**

- B.1 Charge to SHR
- B.2 SHR Membership

#### **Appendix C HASS Concentration Enrollments from AY2007 – AY2018**

#### **Appendix D About the Concentration Advisor Meetings**

- D.1 Meeting dates and attendees
- D.2 General Questions for Concentration Advisors
- D.3 Expanded Questions for Concentration Advisors
- D.4 Concentration Advisor Meeting Notes

#### **Appendix E HASS Concentration Student Survey Summary**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Over the past two years, the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR) conducted the first full review of how the Concentration Component of the HASS Requirement is functioning. The news is good: by and large, HASS concentrations are functioning very well, and SHR's meetings with Concentration Advisors and administrative staff have yielded a wealth of information about how concentrations are structured, what advising techniques are being used, and how some HASS units and programs build a sense of community that benefits both students and faculty. This information will be helpful not only to HASS faculty interested in revising old concentrations or proposing new ones, but also to all current and future Concentration Advisors and unit heads, who can now compare how they are running their concentration with what others are doing.

Drawing on information derived from these meetings, as well as the findings from a student survey about the HASS Concentration experience, SHR has outlined what we see as the essential or minimum practices necessary to administer a concentration (section 4.1), as well as compiling lists of best practices (section 4.2). We have also catalogued some of the challenges faced by HASS faculty working to administer concentrations (section 2.6) and made recommendations for how MIT can better support their work and improve the experience of concentrators (section 4.3). SHR regards these two sections (2.6 and 4.3) as the most critical to share widely with faculty and administrators inside and outside of HASS, even as we note these lists grew out of the detailed evidence and analysis contained within the broader body of this report.

While some HASS concentrations are doing more than others to enrich the intellectual and pedagogical experience of MIT students, SHR was extremely impressed by the amount of time and energy many faculty pour into improving the undergraduate experience. We hope that highlighting their personalized advising strategies, in particular, can serve as an inspiration for others at MIT to follow their lead (section 2.3). Yet many of these devoted teachers and advisors expressed concern about how inconsistent advising outside HASS and in the first year impedes MIT students' ability to take full advantage of what is available to them inside HASS. They also drew our attention to aspects of MIT culture and resource allocation that signal a lack of institutional support for the study of the humanities and arts, in particular. SHR recommends that MIT redouble its efforts to communicate through actions as well as words that it values the humanities, arts, and social sciences and considers study in these fields to be an integral part of an MIT education.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

---

### *The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) Requirement*

The HASS Requirement is an indispensable part of every student's undergraduate education that provides students with a greater understanding of human society, its traditions, and its institutions. The Requirement deepens students' knowledge in a variety of cultural and disciplinary areas and encourages the development of sensibilities and skills vital to an effective and satisfying life as an individual, a professional, and a member of society.

All undergraduates must complete eight HASS subjects to fulfill the HASS General Institute Requirement. Students are expected to complete at least one HASS subject each semester. The HASS Requirement has three components: distribution, concentration, and electives.

- Distribution Component (3 subjects) – breadth
  - Students are required to complete three HASS Distribution subjects, one from each of the following categories:
    - Humanities (HASS-H)
    - Arts (HASS-A)
    - Social Sciences (HASS-S)
- Concentration Component (3 or 4 subjects) – depth
  - Students must complete a HASS Concentration of 3-4 subjects that together provide an increased knowledge in a particular field.
- Electives (1 or 2 subjects) – experimentation
  - The remainder of the HASS Requirement can be fulfilled with 1-2 additional subjects from any HASS category (HASS-H, HASS-A, HASS-S), including subjects designated as HASS Elective (HASS-E).

### *Oversight of HASS Concentrations*

Historically, HASS units in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS), and elsewhere in the Institute, have developed and maintained HASS Concentration programs. Additionally, interdisciplinary HASS Concentrations have been constituted over time, as new questions and combinations of disciplines have emerged. The goals of the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement in overseeing the Concentration Component of the HASS Requirement are to:

- Periodically review the roster of HASS Concentrations to avoid overlap and confusion in the offerings;
- Ensure the sustainability of existing HASS Concentrations; and
- Facilitate the establishment of new HASS Concentrations when intellectual developments merit it.

In the course of periodic reviews, SHR works with the HASS unit responsible for administering each HASS Concentration to ensure that subject offerings are sufficient to sustain the HASS Concentration, and that appropriate instructors, preferably tenure-stream faculty, are available to serve as Concentration Advisors.

Regarding the review of new interdisciplinary concentration proposals, SHR works to ensure that a cohesive set of subjects align with the articulated rationale for the new concentration and the mission of the Concentration Component of the HASS Requirement. SHR asks that all proposed interdisciplinary concentrations:

- State the intellectual and pedagogical justification for creating the new interdisciplinary concentration;
- Establish that MIT faculty support for the new concentration is broad and committed, so as to ensure a robust and relevant roster of subjects and facilitate the concentration's administration and student advising; and
- Design a course structure that is both intellectually coherent and sustainable.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) Requirement at MIT has been a mainstay of the General Institute Requirements (GIRs) for over 50 years. During this time period, the HASS Requirement has undergone a number of revisions, as the Faculty has continued to place more emphasis on a well-rounded education in HASS and its importance in the undergraduate curriculum.

The HASS Requirement was first proposed by the Committee on Educational Survey in 1949, more commonly known as the Lewis Committee or Lewis Report. The proposal was meant to ensure that MIT would continue to prepare its students for professional and personal success and attract students who might otherwise attend liberal arts colleges. Part of the Lewis' report recommendations included a three-subject sequence that we now call the HASS Concentration. The faculty teaching in these fields were given license to determine the disciplines that would be an appropriate three-term sequence of study, relegating ownership of concentrations to the individual HASS units. While the number of concentrations has increased over the years, the HASS Concentration itself has remained fairly consistent and left to individual HASS units to administer, even as the Distribution Component of the HASS Requirement has undergone numerous revisions during that time.

The latest revision to the Distribution Component of the HASS Requirement was implemented in 2010 by the then newly created Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR), a permanent subcommittee of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP). The Subcommittee was charged, in part, with the implementation of the revised Distribution Component of the HASS Requirement as well as the Requirement's oversight. The revision greatly expanded student choice of subjects that could count towards the HASS Distribution. After implementing the revised Distribution, SHR studied the effect that the liberalization of the Distribution had on the HASS curricula and student pathways through the HASS Requirement. While SHR did not find anything concerning about how students completed the Distribution Component of the HASS Requirement, the Subcommittee could not make a full judgment until reviewing the HASS Requirement as a whole.

The Subcommittee's subsequent work turned to the HASS Concentration. In planning for a review of concentrations, SHR determined that a census of all existing concentrations would both benefit the Institute and also inform any recommendations the Subcommittee may make going forward. The purpose of the census was to collect information on and share the goals, best practices, and challenges faced for each HASS Concentration. Based on what it has learned from this rigorous process, SHR has created an inventory of best practices and has made recommendations to improve the student experience of the Concentration Component of the HASS Requirement and to help Concentration Advisors ensure that their concentrations are well supported.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

In the fall of 2017, SHR members discussed the goals of a HASS Concentration review and defined the review's process. Members considered a number of different ways to learn about each concentration and settled on Concentration Advisor interviews. This method was selected for a number of reasons: 1) members wanted to learn about each concentration, 2) these interviews would cover a lot of ground and would allow for relevant follow up questions, and 3) meeting in person would relay the importance that SHR has placed on the process. After deciding on a specific process to follow and target interviewees, SHR developed two sets of questions to help achieve those goals. One set of guiding questions was used by SHR members to help generate conversation at the meetings with Concentration Advisors (see Appendix D.3). The second set of questions was more general and was sent to Concentration Advisors beforehand to help them prepare for the meeting with SHR members (see Appendix D.2).

The meetings began in November 2017 and concluded in February 2019. Generally, two Subcommittee members (chair included) and two staff members met with the Concentration Advisor(s) and academic administrator for each concentration. Two SHR members attended to help guide the discussion and allow for multiple perspectives during the interview. One staff member took notes (see Appendix D.4), and the other acted as reference. Academic administrators were invited because they have experience with the unit's concentration, often act as a proxy Concentration Advisor, and frequently answer concentrator and Concentration Advisor questions.

For HASS units with multiple concentrations, SHR met with the advisors who were available – e.g., SHR met with all of the Concentration Advisors who were available for Global Studies and Languages (GSL) in a single meeting. In some instances, SHR members met with the Concentration Advisors for multiple concentrations in one meeting – e.g., SHR members met with the Concentration Advisor for Economics and the Concentration Advisor for Political Science in a single meeting. Overall, SHR members met with 31 Concentration Advisors representing 39 concentrations (see Appendix D.1).

Concentration Advisors were asked to articulate the goals and standards of success for their concentrations. A number of questions were asked about administration, advising, community, and curriculum. Best practices and challenges were discussed, and Concentration Advisors were asked specifically if there was anything they wanted to do but could not because of institutional constraints.

In addition to Concentration Advisor meetings, SHR developed and administered a student survey to learn more about how students view concentrations. This survey was administered to third- and fourth-year students (2,313 students were invited to participate). Of the students surveyed, some had already completed their concentration (typically within the fourth-year group) and some had yet to propose their concentration (mostly in the third-year group). The survey opened to these students on October 10, 2018 and was available for 12 days. The overall response rate was 22 percent, which is a relatively good rate of return for such surveys. Student survey responses and comments were compiled and analyzed (see Appendix E).

## 2.0 FINDINGS – CONCENTRATION ADVISOR MEETINGS

---

One finding that became apparent during the course of this review is that conducting this type of review is an extremely labor-intensive but worthwhile process. Not only did Subcommittee members learn a great deal about how each concentration operates from conversing with Concentration Advisors, Concentration Advisors were also apprised of various opportunities, resources, and strategies previously unknown to them. For example, Subcommittee members were able to share information with advisors about the existence of new sources of funding to support pedagogical innovation, as well as ingenious publicity or advising tactics that other Concentration Advisors have been using to attract or enrich student interest in their subject offerings.

These serendipitous moments of sharing of information across sections were a result of the fact that the same members of the SHR interview team (faculty and staff) were present at multiple meetings, meaning that they were able to transmit information they had acquired at one meeting to attendees at a later meeting. This was an unanticipated benefit of the way we chose to collect information about how each concentration functions. That said, the process was very time- and labor-intensive for a small group of people who attended multiple meetings, so the Subcommittee does not recommend repeating it frequently.

Below is a summary of what the Subcommittee learned about how concentrations are structured, how they operate, what the student experience is like, and how Concentration Advisors approach the various components of their concentration. (Appendix D.4 contains the notes from each Concentration Advisor meeting.)

### 2.1 CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE

The Subcommittee already knew that HASS Concentrations may consist of three or four subjects in a particular field of study. We also knew that all existing interdisciplinary concentrations consist of four subjects, on the grounds that deepening student knowledge of an interdisciplinary field of study is especially challenging, since its constituent disciplines have different content and methodologies, thus making it harder to gain a sophisticated sense of the issues that animate the field as a whole. But the review process revealed that a surprising number of non-interdisciplinary concentrations also require four subjects or suggest that students take four subjects if they can. This fact reinforced the Subcommittee’s commitment to the precedent that all interdisciplinary concentrations should require students to take four subjects.

<b>Number of Subjects Required for the Concentration</b>	<b>Number of Concentrations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Three	17	44%
Four	14	36%
Three or Four (Language Concentrations)	8	20%

There was also significant variety in how concentrations are structured. For the most part, they adhere to one of three formats: students select subjects from tiers, from categories, or from a single list of subjects offered in the discipline. Tiered concentrations ask students to complete a

specific introductory level or “gateway” subject and then apply that knowledge in more advanced subjects. Concentrations that ask students to complete subjects from specified categories look to ensure that students gain a breadth of understanding within the field, rather than focusing too exclusively in a single area. The most flexible option is to allow students to take any three or four classes drawn from a single, comprehensive list.

All three structures generally allow students some flexibility in their subject options if they make a cogent argument for their curricular choices. Though not all concentrations advertise this as an option, many allow students to take a subject outside of the list posted on the concentration website or even outside of MIT, as long as they get this choice approved in advance by the Concentration Advisor.

Moreover, the more paths there are for students to take through the concentration, the more students may be unsure of what subjects to take, meaning that they may require more attentive advising in order to make the most of their concentration experience. More structured concentrations might actually be more attractive to students because completing them seems more straightforward: students can quickly learn what subjects they need to take and then plan to take them. Having a gateway and/or a capstone course also allows faculty much more control over the kind of learning experience that concentrators have. That said, this type of tiered structure also constrains faculty’s freedom in terms of teaching assignments, because those subjects must then be offered with great regularity, so that students can complete the concentration in a timely manner.

Because each discipline and field is different, the Subcommittee does not deem uniformity in concentration structure to be either necessary or desirable. Faculty in each unit, section, or program should have the freedom to select whichever kind of structure they judge will best support undergraduate learning in their area of expertise, without over-taxing their personnel and resources.

<b>Sequenced/Categories/Flexible Concentration</b>	<b>Number of Concentrations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tiered	17	44%
Categorized	13	33%
Flexible	9	23%

Lastly, a vital component of a healthy concentration is a consistent and predictable offering of subjects that can count towards the concentration. Some HASS units are doing more than others to ensure curricular consistency. The Subcommittee was surprised to discover that in some units, faculty requests – conveyed to a staff member – determine who teaches what, when. In contrast, some units entrust a small curriculum committee of faculty members with the job of maintaining oversight over subject offerings. Under this latter system, faculty are still invited to submit requests, but sometimes they are asked or required by the curriculum committee to cover particular subjects that have been deemed critical to the smooth functioning of the curriculum.

SHR sees great benefits in having a curriculum committee. The oversight these committees provide gives Concentration Advisors the ability to forecast which subjects will be taught and provides students the confidence they need that their planned concentration will be completed by

graduation. It also encourages faculty to periodically re-evaluate how well their curriculum is working and whether new subjects need to be added or old ones eliminated or reconceived. And finally, it can be a means of ensuring that different kinds of subjects are equitably distributed amongst faculty at different career stages, so that junior faculty do not get unduly pressured to consistently teach subjects with a higher work-load.

Smaller or busier units may find it hard to field a curriculum committee or prefer a different approach for some other reason, which is their prerogative. But SHR strongly suggests that at least one tenure-stream faculty member be involved in the process of determining what subjects get offered, when, and by whom. This pedagogically important and sometimes challenging task should not be outsourced to a staff member who may not feel that they are able to say “no” to faculty subject requests or after-the-fact pressure by instructors who demand a different teaching assignment.

## 2.2 STAFFING AND RESOURCES

SHR was pleased to find that, as per our longstanding recommendation, Concentration Advisors are almost exclusively tenure-stream faculty or senior lecturers. Teaching staff at those ranks are better positioned to provide continuous advising for students than non-long-term contract instructors, as well as better compensated for such labor. Additionally, all concentrations are supported by the HASS unit’s academic administrator or, in the case of interdisciplinary concentrations, the SHASS Dean’s Office academic administrator. (Several of the interdisciplinary Concentration Advisors were previously unaware that the Dean’s office was willing and able to assist them in this way.)

HASS units employ a number of strategies for assigning the role of Concentration Advisor. Options include: rotating faculty members as Concentration Advisors each academic year or semester; assigning multiple faculty as advisors; delegating the role to junior faculty; assigning a senior lecturer the responsibility; or asking a single knowledgeable faculty member to take up the mantle for a number of years. In the case of interdisciplinary concentrations, one or more of the faculty involved with the field of study will volunteer to act as the Concentration Advisor or, if necessary, the SHASS Dean’s Office will ask a faculty member with relevant experience to step into the role.

One benefit of assigning junior faculty to the role of Concentration Advisor is they quickly learn about their HASS unit’s curricular offerings and have an opportunity to get to know students who may be interested in further study within the discipline. Conversely, junior faculty are under immense pressure to earn tenure and, if the role of Concentration Advisor is conceived of by the unit as extremely labor-intensive (e.g. involving required face-to-face meetings with students), then assigning junior faculty this responsibility may adversely affect their ability to successfully navigate MIT’s demanding promotion process. An alternative is to assign multiple faculty to the Concentration Advisor role. This helps alleviate some of the workload and, if the unit chooses to pair up junior and senior faculty members, also opens up mentoring opportunities.

Rotating faculty through the role of Concentration Advisor ensures that all faculty in the HASS unit get acquainted with their unit’s curriculum, gain information about concentrators’ interests,

and share the administrative workload of Concentration Advisor. The Subcommittee was favorably impressed by one unit's decision to have a mix of junior and senior faculty take turns working in teams of three in the Concentration Advisor role. This strategy avoids putting too much pressure on one faculty member in a given year. That same unit also decided to increase the length of time each faculty member will spend as an advisor, so that students can keep working with the same advisor for several years as they move through the concentration.

Another strategy employed by HASS units is to assign a senior lecturer as the Concentration Advisor. In some cases, the senior lecturer is “permanently” assigned the role and is given an occasional respite from the responsibility for a semester or two. The consistency in this model leads to an experienced Concentration Advisor who has a very deep knowledge of the curriculum and understanding of concentrators. This person is able to develop and administer programs for the concentrators with a continuity that a rotating cast of Concentration Advisors might lack. A drawback is that lecturers who are already doing a lot of labor for the unit may feel unable to say no if asked to take on this role as an added responsibility, meaning that unit heads should keep such equity issues in mind when distributing unit service assignments. Additionally, outsourcing this role to senior lecturers means that tenure-stream faculty lose out on the benefits of serving as an advisor (described above), though this loss may be deemed to be outweighed by other gains, such as freeing up faculty to perform other service obligations across the unit, school, or Institute.

### **2.3 ADVISING STRATEGIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND GOALS**

Based on its meetings with Concentration Advisors, SHR identified three main advising strategies. Some concentrations require that each student meet face-to-face with an advisor; others invite prospective concentrators to group meetings; and many conduct their advising via the Online HASS Concentration Form or via email. That said, all the advisors we spoke with expressed a willingness to meet face-to-face with students, if students request that option.

While individual HASS units and programs are in the best position to judge for themselves what type of advising is most pedagogically appropriate and practical for them, the Subcommittee strongly recommends that advisors who rely solely on the online form and email actively communicate their willingness to meet with students, who may not realize that a face-to-face meeting is a feasible option, or understand why it might be helpful.

SHR also encourages interdisciplinary concentrations to consider choosing the face-to-face advising option, since navigating a concentration that consists of subjects spread across multiple disciplines can be more challenging for students and an advisor can help guide them to subjects that will form an intellectually coherent sequence. And we once again urge unit heads to be attuned to the issue of protecting junior faculty's research and writing time if the form of advising chosen is an especially labor intensive one.

Concentration Advisors reported advantages and disadvantages with each advising style. Depending on the size of the concentration, requiring face-to-face meetings can be a monumental amount of work, especially at the start of term. Nevertheless, several very popular concentrations employ this option, on the grounds that it allows advisors:

- To explain the various paths through the concentration, and what kind of learning they are designed to foster;
- To invite students to consider whether they want their HASS coursework to function as an enhancement to or an escape from their primary academic field(s) of interest;
- To learn more about each student and make individualized subject recommendations to them based on the advisor's own insider knowledge about subject content or instruction;
- To give students a "big picture" sense of the benefits of studying the advisor's home discipline, and (if relevant) informing them about sub-areas within that discipline that relate to the student's interests;
- To answer questions students may have about the discipline or interdisciplinary field of study, or other academic matters;
- To alert students to the existence of topics, subjects, or other HASS units and concentrations they might not initially realize are of interest to them;
- To discover what drew students to the concentration in order to know which of the unit's publicity efforts are working;
- To suss out which subjects seem especially appealing to undergraduates, or what subjects are not being offered that might have broad appeal if they were;
- To apprise students of how easy it is to turn a concentration into a minor and why they might want to do that (e.g. it shows up on your transcript, unlike a concentration);
- To inform students about any community-building, extra-curricular activities that the unit runs; and
- To supply students with an opportunity to begin forging a personal relationship with another HASS faculty member or senior lecturer that might develop into a more in-depth mentoring relationship.

As the length of this list indicates, there are a lot of benefits to face-to-face advising, many of which also apply to the option of arranging group meetings with students. The way this second option works is that all prospective concentrators, after they submit their Online HASS Concentration Proposal Form, are asked to attend a meeting during a predetermined time period. At this meeting, students get to know each other and learn more about the concentration, the option to minor or major, and the various subject offerings. At the end of the meeting, the Concentration Advisor approves each concentrator's proposal. This option allows for more efficient use of the Concentration Advisor's time, but is still labor intensive at the start of the semester. It also allows concentrators to get to know one another, fostering a sense of community.

A more common process for advising concentrators is to make use of the messaging system within the Online HASS Concentration Form or through email. Students consult the concentration's website to choose subjects and then submit their concentration proposals online; the Concentration Advisor reviews the proposals electronically and, if they are error free, approves them. If the concentration proposal is not acceptable, the Concentration Advisor can return it for revision and leave instructions on how to make the concentration compliant with the specific concentration's rules. If necessary, the Concentration Advisor can also provide additional information on transfer subjects or subjects that are non-standard for the concentration by commenting in the online form or sending an email.

This simple online interaction is extremely efficient and effective for many concentrators. It saves time for both students and advisors and it works well for highly structured concentrations that articulate their requirements clearly on their websites. Yet there are drawbacks to this mode of advising. Several long-time advisors reported that, after switching to the online form, their sense of connection with students diminished; they miss learning about their subjects from the student perspective. Students who are advised through the online form lose the opportunity to have a more wide-ranging conversation with a faculty member. Students may not find out about all the curricular and extra-curricular options available to them, and an online advisor-advisee interaction is unlikely to develop into a mentoring relationship.

As improving student advising is often mentioned as an Institute goal, SHR made a point to track some of the best practices of the most conscientious Concentration Advisors. Although all advisors share the goal of helping students to successfully complete the concentration, the Subcommittee was struck by the fact that some units have a much more broadly comprehensive vision of what the goals and responsibilities for advising entails than others. A narrow construction of what Concentration Advisors do includes: working to ensure that the webpage is accurate; reviewing proposed concentrations; providing feedback through the Online HASS Concentration Form (if necessary); and approving proposals that are correct. A broader construction of what Concentration Advisors do includes all those activities, but also many other, more personalized forms of outreach that advisors mentioned doing during face-to-face meetings with students (detailed in the list above).

## 2.4 PUBLICITY

Connecting with students is a challenge faced by many HASS units. Many advisors expressed frustration that students use the “Firehose” tool to pick HASS subjects whose primary appeal is that they fit into their schedule, rather than taking time to think about what kinds of HASS subjects might genuinely interest them and then seeking out subjects in those fields of study. Concentrations that do not align with the kinds of subjects most students take in high school (e.g. Anthropology) face the challenge that many students don’t think to look for subjects in those areas. Concentrations that do align with common high school subjects (e.g. Literature) face the challenge that students may think they’ve “been there, done that” already.

In addition, faculty expressed a considerable amount of concern in these meetings that the arts and humanities are marginalized and poorly supported at MIT. On and off the record, faculty members expressed a desire that the upper administration do more to support, publicize, and spark student interest in – and appreciation of – the arts and humanities. Several advisors mentioned how helpful a humanities center would be in this regard, since it could serve as a visible sign of MIT’s commitment to humanistic thought, as well as an umbrella under which interdisciplinary HASS subjects (currently called HEX subjects) could be offered and publicized more broadly. If such a center seems infeasible right now, then SHR recommends that the administration allocate permanent funding to pre-existing initiatives that raise the public profile of the arts and humanities on campus (see section 4.3).

HASS units employ a variety of methods to advertise concentrations to students, from the standard webpages and staffed tables at the fall term Academic Expo and Tour de SHASS, and

spring term Campus Preview Weekend, to putting up flyers in the “Infinite Corridor” or setting up a booth in Lobby 10. Some units take advantage of email lists to connect with students who enroll in their unit’s subjects to publicize their curricular offerings and may even advertise subject options in the classroom, particularly in introductory subjects.

### *Websites*

HASS units rely on their websites to advertise and communicate basic information about their concentrations, including the number of subjects or units required to complete the concentration, its structure, and information on the specific subjects that can count towards the concentration. Some websites also specify how many subjects taken outside of MIT may count towards the concentration and include information on how to minor and major in the field of study. Many of the interdisciplinary concentration webpages categorize subjects into various subfields.

Reviewing concentration websites in advance of the meetings with Concentration Advisors, Subcommittee members were surprised to notice how many websites limited themselves to this kind of nuts-and-bolts information about *how* to complete the concentration, without prefacing this information with a brief explanation of *why* a student might want to do so (i.e. what they could expect to learn by studying the discipline; what the goals of the discipline are). During meetings with those units, SHR suggested that they might want to add a sentence or two about their disciplines to the unit website, an idea that was received enthusiastically by all.

Another revelation was that not all websites include the Concentration Advisor contact information. SHR determined that including this information on the website is important, so that students know who to contact if they have questions. We further recommend that a line or two of text be added that briefly explains to students why they might want to come in for a face-to-face meeting. In drafting these lines, advisors can draw on the comprehensive list of reasons articulated in the “Advising Strategies, Responsibilities, and Goals” section (see above).

### *Other Publicity and Outreach*

A number of HASS units have mounted additional creative efforts to familiarize students with their field of study and publicize their concentrations. These include:

- Advertising subject offerings on various screens around campus.
- Creating a video about the goals and methods of the discipline and posting it on the unit website.
- Crafting a brochure about the concentration that can be passed out at various events.
- Hosting events where students talk to current concentrators about their experiences.
- Inviting instructors to serve as guest speakers in large introductory subjects, so that students get to know another faculty member and are motivated to pursue additional coursework.
- Emailing students who get an “A” grade in an initial subject to encourage them to take other subjects in the unit that their professor thinks they might enjoy.
- Emailing students who are doing well at fifth week – the opposite of the fifth-week flag – to signal to students that they should consider continuing their studies in that field.

## 2.5 INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITIES

SHR was impressed that some concentrations create spaces for students to come together outside of the classroom to engage in various kinds of intellectual scholarship with one another and/or faculty members. Not every unit has the time, resources, or level of student engagement to provide a sense of intellectual community to its concentrators. That said, concentrations with few students could consider partnering with other concentrations that have points of curricular overlap, and HASS units that sponsor such events for their majors and minors could consider inviting concentrators.

These intellectual communities can look different across concentrations. One commonality is that they engage students outside of the classroom to provide them with opportunities to appreciate their field of study with peers and academics. Some examples of outreach that faculty are doing that SHR learned about during its meetings with Concentration Advisors include the following:

- Inviting concentrators to attend relevant academic talks.
- Having teaching assistants in introductory-level subjects run snack sessions where student can seek help (e.g., before exams) and get to know fellow students.
- Creating a special series of talks linked to the concentration and encouraging or requiring students to attend as part of their work in a particular class.
- Hosting annual snack sessions, lunches, or dinners for concentrators – often aimed at minors and majors, too – at which students can get to know faculty, advisors, staff, and other concentrators.
- Running a weekly tea where faculty and students, including concentrators, can chat about topics of mutual interest.
- Collaborating with other units, programs, or institutions at MIT (e.g. museums, the MISTI program, Arts at MIT) to hold public events to which concentrators are invited.
- Holding an awards banquet where students receive various prizes based on their academic scholarship.
- Opening up some part of unit space to be used as a lounge.
- Organizing outings to local spaces and places to attend related events.
- Sponsoring an annual trip to a location further afield for concentrators, minors, and majors.

Overall, when SHR members met with Concentration Advisors, many relayed the difficulty in creating intellectual community for concentrators. A few shared stories of trying and failing to get students to participate in extra-curricular events. However, most agreed that creating an intellectual community is something that they should strive for and agreed to think about how to provide opportunities for students to participate in the events held by their HASS units. To that end, several were pleased to learn from SHR staff that the Online HASS Concentration Form supplies them with a mailing list that they can use to contact all of their concentrators in order to apprise them of upcoming events.

## 2.6 CHALLENGES

During the meetings with Concentration Advisors, SHR members heard about a wide variety of challenges that HASS units faced in supporting their concentrations. There were many common challenges shared as well as some unique ones. Some of these challenges have been discussed in the preceding section, and some additional points are examined here.

### *Profile of HASS at MIT*

Concentration Advisors have observed that many students come to MIT with a primary interest in engineering, and without a comprehensive picture of the (inter)disciplinary richness of the humanities, arts, and social sciences. The challenges related to this are:

- The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences is not a priority for some students when they arrive at MIT.
- Students may be hesitant to investigate a field of study they know little about or do not have experience in (e.g. Anthropology).
- The “Firehose” subject-selection tool short-circuits the process of students thinking broadly and open-mindedly about what HASS disciplines might interest them or enrich their education.
- Major advisors, in some cases, don’t do enough to discourage students from regarding the HASS Requirement as an encumbrance to be completed as quickly and easily as possible, rather than an opportunity to expand their intellectual horizons and an integral part of their education.
- Even very successful HASS Concentrations and programs (e.g. the Ancient and Medieval Studies Concentration, the MIT Communications Forum) have not been permanently funded by MIT, but must continually reapply for internal and external grants to sponsor core subjects and annual events.
- MIT’s habit of encouraging HASS faculty to seek outside funding for programming intended primarily to benefit MIT students and faculty is part of broader entrepreneurial ethos at MIT that is better suited to support the work of scientists than humanists (whose work is rarely funded by outside sources).

### *Intellectual Community*

There were a number of difficulties reported with regard to providing students with opportunities for participation in intellectual communities. Some Concentration Advisors had more unique challenges than others, but some of the more common issues noted include:

- There are no designated spaces to gather concentrators for an activity or to display work (e.g. for Art, Culture, and Technology students to display their artwork).
- Many spaces ideal for hosting student events are not available free of charge to faculty, but must be paid for, as if MIT were a business rather than an institution of higher learning.
- Concentrations lack resources (financial and administrative) to support activities that would help in encouraging the creation and continuation of intellectual communities.
- There is not a central repository of information to help students create and maintain clubs or other extra-curricular activities where students can come together and share ideas.

### *Advising*

Some of the advising challenges are associated with how Concentration Advisors choose to interact with students. Many of the common concerns were:

- It is an uphill battle for HASS Advisors to counteract incomplete, erroneous, or narrow-minded advising that students sometimes receive from other sources, since many students don't think they need additional advising from HASS faculty (see survey, below).
- The amount of time involved in conducting face-to-face meetings with concentrators can be overwhelming.
- The deadlines to submit and approve Online HASS Concentration Forms (proposals and completion approvals) put a lot of pressure on Concentration Advisors to review and approve many forms in a short amount of time.
- Some HASS units have reported that they have lost a connection to their students/concentrators with the transition to the Online HASS Concentration Form.
- Students may not be aware of the Concentration Component until late in their academic careers and attempt to combine a disparate set of subjects for a concentration.

Sometimes, especially in some of the interdisciplinary concentrations, the Concentration Advisor may not have expertise in the subfield that students are interested in studying. This requires the Concentration Advisor to contact more knowledgeable faculty to help with the advising of students. Additionally, in interdisciplinary concentrations, the Concentration Advisor may act more like a temporary steward and not feel empowered to make administrative changes or work to create intellectual communities.

### *Curricular*

Concentration Advisors also shared some of the curricular difficulties associated with the concentration.

- Some concentration subjects are not taught regularly.
- Some students face challenges in forecasting when subjects they would like to take for their concentration will be taught.
- Students often have scheduling conflicts between their concentration subjects and their major requirements.
- Tenured faculty are not always enthusiastic about teaching introductory subjects that typically count toward concentrations.

Many of the challenges that concentrations reportedly face can be averted or minimized with careful planning, use of available tools, and the creation of some resources to help Concentration Advisors foster community. Other challenges would require a little bit more help from the administration to address, such as space and funds. Many of SHR's recommendations are meant to address these challenges.

### 3.0 FINDINGS – STUDENT SURVEY

In addition to learning from Concentration Advisors, subcommittee members sought to understand as much as they could about the student experience with the HASS Concentration. The student survey, which was administered to third- and fourth-year students (2,313 students were invited to participate), covered questions on concentration choice, advising, and intellectual communities. The complete summary of the survey can be found in Appendix D.

#### 3.1 CHOICE – HOW STUDENTS DECIDE ON CONCENTRATIONS

The survey administered to third- and fourth-year students asked them to indicate the resources they used when choosing a concentration. Sixty-seven percent of students who had already proposed a concentration indicated that they used the website with concentration information as part of their process for selecting a concentration. Forty-four percent indicated that they used their peers as a resource in choosing a concentration. The next most prominent resources used included subject instructors and Concentration Advisors, each at 19 percent. With respondents who had yet to propose a concentration, the breakdown was similar, although “major advisor” garnered 24 percent of the responses compared to 7 percent of respondents who had already proposed a concentration. Respondents also commented that prior interest in the field, parents, and subjects they enjoyed were part of the decision-making process. When respondents were asked if they had all the information they needed to decide on a concentration, close to 90 percent of students said “yes” (88 percent for students who had proposed a concentration and 89 percent for students who had not yet proposed one.)

#### How much did the following influence your choice of concentration?

	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Great Influence	N/A
Peer recommendations.	39%	20%	23%	12%	7%
Faculty or advisor recommendation.	53%	15%	13%	4%	16%
I had an existing interest in the concentration.	4%	3%	19%	74%	1%
The information on the concentration’s website.	23%	19%	38%	16%	4%
The subjects were the easiest to fit into my schedule.	30%	24%	25%	17%	4%
I already had completed one or more subjects in the concentration.	13%	9%	27%	44%	7%
I believed the concentration would help me achieve my future professional goals.	29%	21%	24%	21%	4%

The majority of respondents (93 percent) indicated that an existing interest in the concentration had a “Moderate Influence” to “Great Influence” on their choice. While pursuing a prior interest is one valid way to approach the Concentration Component, the Subcommittee would like to see more students recognize the value of using this Requirement as an opportunity to expand their intellectual horizons.

Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated that having completed one or more subjects in the concentration had a “Moderate Influence” to “Great Influence” on their choice. Given that students sometimes use the “Firehose” tool to select HASS subjects more for scheduling than academic reasons, this data suggests students might be choosing concentrations more on the basis of convenience than intellectual enrichment. Only fourteen percent of respondents who had proposed a concentration stated that their major played a role in their choice of concentration. While the Subcommittee understands and supports the desire of some students to use the HASS Requirement as an opportunity to do something completely distinct from their major, we would like to see more students thinking holistically about how studying a HASS discipline could relate in a more integral way to their other intellectual interests and pursuits.

Although respondents consulted peers in determining which concentration to select, 59 percent of respondents indicated that peer recommendations had “No Influence” to “Very Little Influence” on their choice of concentration. That said, students often consult peers when choosing which HASS subjects to take, so insofar as having already taken a particular HASS subject is affecting their choice of concentration, peer recommendations may be playing a bigger role in student decision-making than students themselves recognize.

Respondents, for the most part, were happy with their choice of concentration. However, 25 percent of respondents indicated that they wished a concentration existed that was not available as an option. When asked to state which concentration they would like to concentrate in, many respondents suggested that they would like to see concentrations in psychology, fine arts, dance, video game design, classical languages, global health, film studies, design, policy or poverty studies, and sociology.

### **3.2 ADVISING**

Overall, students are receiving the advising that they expect and require from their Concentration Advisors. Many students had specific expectations on what, if anything, they should learn from their Concentration Advisor. When surveyed, 57 percent of respondents indicated that they did not receive any advising for their concentration, which matches the 58 percent of students who did not believe that advising for their concentration was necessary.

These data suggest that if MIT wants students to take advantage of the opportunity to receive field-specific advising, we need to do a better job communicating to students what the benefits of such advising are. When students did interact with their Concentration Advisors, 20 percent reported that they learned more about the field of study, 26 percent learned more about the subjects that make up the concentration, and 17 percent learned about minor and/or major information.

Students themselves seem surprisingly open to the possibility that more intensive advising might be preferable to relying solely on the online form. Even though the majority of respondents indicated that they did not think advising was necessary for their concentration, 38 percent of respondents that have proposed concentrations would prefer a face-to-face meeting and 60 percent of students who had not yet proposed a concentration would prefer a face-to-face meeting with their Concentration Advisor. One student commented *“Email is good, but I’d like the ability to meet face to face if that became something I actively wanted.”* Another student noted, *“Option on the form or face to face meeting – when there’s actual content, face to face is great, otherwise, it’s nice to just get things checked off.”* Additionally, 38 percent of respondents who are concentrators indicated that they would like to interact with their Concentration Advisor through email, as opposed to 24 percent who prefer interactions through the Online HASS Concentration form.

When the Subcommittee looked at how respondents would like to interact with their Concentration Advisors and what they would like to learn, this inclination for more intensive advising was even more striking. Students showed a clear preference for meeting face-to-face to learn more about the minor/major options (73 percent), more about the field of study (67 percent), and more about the subjects that make up the concentration (59 percent). Twenty-seven percent of respondents who did not receive advising for their concentration would have preferred to meet face-to-face. Additionally, many of the concentrations that require face-to-face meetings saw a majority of respondents indicate that they preferred face-to-face meetings.

### 3.3 INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITIES

One concern that Concentration Advisors have when considering whether to commit resources to creating an intellectual community is whether students would take advantage of that opportunity. Thirty-three percent of survey respondents indicated that they had participated in events sponsored by the HASS field they are concentrating in, which equals about 100 respondents.

When asked whether they have a sense of community within their HASS field, 38 percent of respondents stated “yes.” Respondents highlighted activities such as *“Lit Tea,” “IAP Italy trip,” “lunches, movie viewings,” “guest lecture series,” “philosophy club,”* and *“plays put on by the theater department,”* among other examples of participation in intellectual communities. Respondents also showed some interest in having more opportunities to participate in intellectual community. Some respondents’ comments on intellectual community included *“WAY more than in Course 6 because the classes are actually reasonable sizes!,” “I wish there was a community,” “I am a member of MITSO, so I feel a sense of community there,” “I’m not part of the literature community at MIT but it definitely exists and seems pretty nice,” “I did Concourse my freshman year, which definitely helped in this regard,”* and *“Why is there no community for HASS majors? There is no way to connect or meet each other, and since there are so few in each department, it is extremely isolating.”*

While 38 percent of respondents have experienced a sense of intellectual community in HASS fields, there are still a majority (62 percent) of students who have not. These students made statement such as *“It exists, I just don’t care for it because it’s too classical/traditional,” “I don’t enjoy HASS,” “I don’t entirely know what this means but I suspect I really don’t want a sense of*

community,” “I just want to learn about linguistics, thanks,” and “idk this isn’t really what I’m at this university for.” However, when asked whether a community of students that share the same interests within the concentration is important, only 12 percent of respondents indicated that it was not important at all (70 percent indicated that it is slightly – extremely important.)

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

---

Overall, HASS Concentrations are working very well. Neither faculty nor students expressed negative opinions about the basic structure of the HASS Requirement (in general) or the Concentration Component (in particular). Faculty, staff, and students generally described the particular concentrations they were familiar with as highly functional, not too difficult to navigate and complete (for students) or to manage and sustain (for faculty and staff). This lack of negative feedback suggests that the more recent rearrangement of the HASS Requirement, implemented in 2010, is working well.

There are a few concentrations whose enrollment numbers are very low. Generally speaking, the Subcommittee thinks that even concentrations with lower enrollments should remain available to students. Small size doesn’t always equal a worse experience; on the contrary, some of the smaller concentrations are able to give students more personalized attention and advising. Additionally, several of the lower enrollment interdisciplinary concentrations also have minors and majors associated with them, so it is important that these programs continue to have the concentration to act as a gateway to a deeper level of engagement with the field of study. Moreover, students at an academic institution of MIT’s caliber ought to have the option to study these fields. SHR should develop guidelines for when and how we should intervene to help advisors of very low-enrolling concentrations to determine whether the concentration should remain as an option and how to strengthen it if necessary.

The recent dissolution of the Psychology Concentration, due to a dearth of faculty members willing and able to support it, has been regretted by both students and faculty. Yet when a HASS Concentration is not supported by a HASS unit or faculty member, changing it from a regular concentration to an option for an individualized special concentration is the best course of action. Since we have no Psychology department at MIT, it is unsurprising that ultimately, there were not enough HASS faculty members to support and run a Psychology Concentration. If the upper administration at MIT wants there to be such a concentration, then they should commit the necessary funds to establishing a Psychology unit or section. That is the best way to ensure that a student earning a Psychology Concentration is benefiting from exposure to faculty whose disciplinary training and expertise allows them to offer appropriately relevant, rigorous, and up-to-date subjects that meet MIT’s high intellectual standards.

Interviewing Concentration Advisors and staff yielded an incredible wealth of information about the outstanding advising that these personnel often supply to enrich the intellectual, pedagogical, and personal experiences of MIT students. Some units commit relatively minimal attention to enriching the educational experiences of concentrators, in particular (as opposed to majors and minors, or all undergraduates taking subjects in the unit). But others are doing a great deal, and

the lists SHR has compiled here of all that they do to advise students and build community will hopefully prove helpful to others willing to follow their lead, as well as to future Institute efforts to articulate what excellent advising looks like.

The Subcommittee also takes this opportunity to recognize the amazing work of the faculty involved with the Ancient and Medieval Studies Concentration, and to urge the upper administration to support this program. AMS serves as the gold standard in interdisciplinary concentrations, supplying a model that SHR routinely advises others to follow. A group of dedicated faculty has created a number of specialized subjects for their program, which includes a minor and major. Additionally, these faculty put together a steering committee that meets during the year and a series of events for students to participate in, including an IAP trip. Two faculty from different units serve as Concentration Advisors and put together all the publicity materials for the concentration, as well as applying for funds so that the Latin and Greek subjects that they have created can continue to be offered.

Overall, it is a tremendous amount of work that these faculty take on to enrich the student experience, and it should be commended and better supported by MIT. SHR recommends that MIT commit to funding this interdisciplinary concentration without making faculty members reapply for funds every year, which is not only a drain on faculty time, but also sends the signal that MIT does not value this thriving interdisciplinary field of inquiry enough to support it as it does other HASS fields and programs.

#### 4.1 ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

The Subcommittee has recorded best practices as part of its review of HASS Concentrations. In discussing these best practices, SHR determined that it would be useful to define a set of minimum expectations for administrating HASS Concentrations. The following is a list of those expectations.

##### *Curricular*

SHR has found that concentrations work best when at least one faculty member is dedicated to overseeing a concentration's curriculum. This curriculum oversight ensures that the list of subjects is up to date and helps prepare the Concentration Advisor to advise students on the appropriateness of subjects based on student interest and subject availability. The group or individual tasked with reviewing a concentration's curriculum should:

- Review the general list of subjects each year – removing subjects no longer offered or appropriate and adding new ones.
- Consider teaching coverage for essential subjects (subjects that fulfill multiple requirements – concentration, minor, major) when regular faculty are not able to teach that term/year. (In some cases, HASS units have hired lecturers to fill in for those subjects. In a separate case, members of a particular HASS unit wrote a charge for their curriculum committee to help motivate faculty to teach important introductory subjects.)

### *Website Information*

As indicated from the HASS Concentration Student Survey results, over 65 percent of students say that they have used or plan to use the website as a resource for selecting their concentration. SHR recommends the following for concentration websites:

- Provide a description of the concentration that goes beyond a practical account of how to complete it. That might mean elaborating on the nature of the discipline and why it is worth studying or explicitly stating the intellectual and pedagogical goals of the concentration. (If needed, SHR can provide good examples.)
- Include a list of subjects, if applicable. (On the student survey, when asked if they had all of the information needed to decide on a concentration, some students indicated that it was not clear which subjects were needed to satisfy the concentration.)
- Update the website whenever there are significant changes to the concentration.

### *Advising*

SHR strongly recommends that Concentration Advisors meet face-to-face with concentrators. This will allow them to (1) learn how students perceive subjects in the discipline; (2) advise students on upgrading to a minor or even major; (3) provide students with the information about subjects they may benefit from and enjoy; (4) show students they are supported; and (5) allow students to grow their networks. At a minimum, Concentration Advisors should:

- Communicate their willingness to meet face-to-face to students.
- Make themselves available for students with questions.
- Make sure the student's plan for the concentration is achievable – i.e., that subjects will be offered.

## **4.2 BEST PRACTICES**

Throughout the course of discussions with Concentration Advisors, SHR members collected a myriad of activities that were considered to be best practices. This report, in part, is meant to share those practices with the community at large. This sharing of information may spur further innovation in concentrations as advisors learn what their colleagues are doing, as well as provide ideas on how to improve the HASS Concentration experience for students.

### *Curricular*

As noted in section 2.1, SHR found that many HASS units had positive results from using a curriculum committee to exercise curriculum oversight. These HASS units used this kind of concentration curriculum oversight, in part, to:

- Provide confidence to concentrators that they will be able to complete their concentration as planned in time to graduate.
- Ensure that key concentration subjects, such as gateway subjects, are staffed with regular tenure-stream faculty.
- Design introductory subjects to include guest faculty to lecture on their specific niche in the field of study to familiarize students with the faculty in their unit.
- Motivate faculty to teach and participate in introductory subjects.

- Assign the Concentration Advisor to teach an introductory subject in the concentration, to get to know students in the unit's concentration.

### *Staffing and Resources*

When assigning the role of Concentration Advisor, SHR recognized that a longer term of service (more than a single semester or academic year) provided advisors the opportunity to develop relationships with concentrators, gain experience, and dedicate more resources towards creating and maintaining an intellectual community.

Some HASS units that have a high number of concentrators benefited from appointing multiple advisors with staggered terms of service. This alleviated the amount of work each advisor had to perform. This also created a space where advisors could consult with each other, split up administrative duties, and provided the opportunity for senior faculty to mentor junior faculty.

Interdisciplinary concentrations that employed an advisor from each participating unit also allowed the advisors to share the responsibilities of administering the concentration and empowered them to make decisions. A steering committee for interdisciplinary concentrations has proven very successful for the Ancient and Medieval Studies Concentration.

A staff member assigned to help the Concentration Advisor(s) has proven an effective partnership. The staff member can help educate the Concentration Advisor on the various rules that should be followed by concentrators, run the events that concentrators are invited to participate in, and keep the concentration website content and subject listing up to date.

### *Advising*

For the reasons highlighted in section 2.3, SHR strongly believes that meeting with students face-to-face is a best practice. To schedule these meetings, Concentration Advisors can use the Online Concentration Form "Return for Revision" function. The "Return for Revision" option helps reinforce the importance of meeting in person – the proposal will not be approved until the meeting occurs. This also allows the Concentration Advisor to personalize a message to the student and emphasize the advantages of meeting in person. If scheduling a group meeting, offer students different time slots to meet.

When advising students, ask them to think about their concentration as an opportunity to enhance their HASS Requirement experience and/or their major. Students may be more engaged with their concentration when they think of it as learning skills they can use in their professional lives and/or enrich their personal lives.

When helping students with planning their concentration subjects, enhance student confidence in the plan by ensuring that the subjects in question will be offered and will appropriately match student interest. Also consider whether a student is close to completing a minor.

### *Publicity – Website, Advertising, and Outreach*

To enhance the content on the concentration website, as noted in section 2.4, one HASS unit created and posted a video describing the discipline and what practitioners in the field do. This could be persuasive to students not already familiar with the HASS field. Another best practice is to ask concentrators to provide anecdotes about their experiences within the field of study and how those experiences enhanced their academic and career success. These can then be added to the website to help students better understand how they might engage with the concentration.

Other best practices in advertising and outreach:

- Advertise where students gather and/or where there is significant student traffic, such as Lobby 10.
- Create a brochure to describe the concentration and its advantages.
- Advertise the concentration in the Tech, on screens around campus, or on posters.
- At the end of the semester, visit subjects in the HASS field and announce other subjects (to be offered the following term) and the various programs available.
- Email students who do well in introductory subjects and invite them to take more subjects and consider concentrating in the discipline. This positive reinforcement for students may make it more likely for future enrollment in other subjects in the field.
- Let students know that the subject they are taking can count towards a concentration. Get students to think about concentrating in the field of study early in their academic career. This information can be added to the subject's syllabus or subject description (if applicable).
- Create UROP opportunities to entice students to become familiar with the field of study.
- Use student ambassadors to promote the concentration to peers.

### *Intellectual Community*

Many of the benefits for creating and sustaining intellectual communities for concentrations have been discussed in section 2.5. Some HASS units have done exemplary work in creating opportunities for students to get to know one another and learn more about the field they study.

Best practices that units employ to create a sense of community include the following:

- Invite concentrators to events with minors and majors. Including concentrators in activities that minors and majors attend can create a sense of community and let concentrators see the kinds of things that interest minors and majors.
- Sponsor an event where students can gather and enjoy snacks while discussing topics covered in class. Food can motivate students to participate in activities.
- Hold film screenings that engage with the field of study. Multiple concentrations can share a single film screening, if applicable.
- Take concentrators on day trips. Students may enjoy attending these types of events with a knowledgeable faculty member to discuss various items of interest. Students can also get to know one another during these events.
- Inform concentrators about other academic opportunities, such as scholarships and fellowships.
- Create an award for academic excellence in the concentration. Reward the top performers in the field of study by presenting them with an award and/or prize.

## 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

### *MIT Administration*

These recommendations are addressed to those in the MIT administration, both in Faculty Governance and the MIT Leadership. These recommendations go beyond SHR's purview and would require decisions from governing bodies that can make decisions in a number of high-level areas.

- If creating a humanities center at MIT is infeasible, then allocate permanent funding to pre-existing initiatives that raise the public profile of the arts and humanities on campus, such as the Ancient and Medieval Studies Concentration and the MIT Communications Forum (both of which sponsor talks that HASS faculty often send students and concentrators to see).
- Create/provide a space for concentrators to display work, perform, or gather together with others interested in HASS fields. SHR heard a number of requests for more space during its meetings with Concentration Advisors. For example, the Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT) Concentration Advisor would like to have a place to display art work created by concentrators. Beyond this specific request, SHR members consistently heard from HASS units that a space for students in HASS is needed and would be of great use.
- Invite a speaker with a HASS background to speak at commencement. Bringing in a HASS speaker would help emphasize the importance of HASS to those in STEM fields and may signal MIT's commitment to ensuring students gain a meaningful education in HASS.
- Provide resources to help concentrators create clubs and other extra-curricular activities. Intellectual communities take resources and a knowledge base to create. Students who are interested in creating a group may not know about all the options available to them and how they might be able to apply for funds. It would be helpful if there were a place that students could go to learn these options and also connect to groups that may have overlapping interest.

### *Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR) / SHASS Dean's Office / HASS Units*

SHR and the SHASS Dean's Office should determine which of the following recommendations can be implemented and then collaborate when possible when working on implementing these recommendations.

- When reorganizing HASS units or creating new programs, a unit should be guided by the principle that the involvement of tenure-stream faculty is integral to the successful functioning of both single-discipline and interdisciplinary concentrations. Temporary and contract lecturers, who are compensated for teaching rather than research, cannot be expected to keep up with new scholarship in the field and evolving best practices in curriculum design and instruction. Nor are they in the best position to advocate for support for their programs or supply long-term advising and mentoring to students. (Even Senior Lecturers, when asked to function as Concentration Advisors, should be compensated for this additional task.)
- Intensify efforts to educate major and first-year advisors on how the HASS Requirement works. Concentration Advisors have expressed frustration over some major advisors' lack of interest in the Concentration Component and the HASS Requirement overall. This is a GIR that all students must complete, but some major advisors have been unable to productively counsel their students in this area.

- Provide opportunities for Concentration Advisors from different HASS units to get to know each other and share curricular interests. Concentration Advisors are, for the most part, isolated from one another and unaware of what colleagues are doing with their concentrations. Providing opportunities for them to get together would be beneficial. Concentration Advisors would be able to learn of innovations in administering their concentrations and in turn could improve the concentrator experience. Additionally, Concentration Advisors could collaborate with concentrations that overlap in some way to create intellectual community. Curricular benefits could also emerge, as Concentration Advisors could discuss interests, which could lead to the creation of more interdisciplinary subjects.
- Consider flagging any low enrolled or unsupported concentrations and mounting an effort to help strengthen those concentrations. SHR members recognized the challenges that some of the lower enrolled interdisciplinary concentrations faced. Enhanced support could take the form of providing advice for how to improve publicity to attract more students, looking at a variety of subjects that may count towards the concentration, and/or recommending the creation/use of introductory subject to attract students. After five years, SHR could check back in with the concentration's stakeholders, who could then decide if they wanted to keep supporting the concentration.
- Think proactively about how to support and sustain the Archeology Concentration, which is in the anomalous position of being based in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering.
- Consider creating a concentration guide that has information about each concentration – goals, how to concentrate, etc. Students expressed a desire for a document that detailed each concentration, its description, structure, and subject list. Also consider updating the website that lists all the concentrations to make it more informative and user-friendly.
- Plan to conduct a full or partial review of concentrations in 10 years. During this formal review, SHR may want to employ a co-chair to conduct Concentration Advisor meetings while the other SHR chair conducts regular SHR business.

## HASS CONCENTRATION DEFINITION

---

*The HASS Concentration offers students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the issues and methodologies in one area of Humanities, Arts, or Social Sciences. All undergraduates must complete a HASS Concentration of 3-4 subjects (some fields require 3, some 4) where they will gain a sophisticated sense of the questions that characterize these fields of study.*

### **HASS Concentrations**

- *African and African Diaspora Studies*
- *American Studies*
- *Ancient and Medieval Studies*
- *Anthropology*
- *Archaeology and Archaeological Science*
- *Art, Culture, and Technology*
- *Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies*
- *Comparative Media Studies*
- *Development Economics*
- *Economics*
- *Ethics*
- *Global Studies and Languages (Chinese; English Language Studies; French; German; Japanese; Portuguese; Russian; Spanish; Other Languages; Studies in International Literatures and Cultures; and Theory of Languages)*
- *History*
- *History of Architecture, Art, and Design*
- *Latin American and Latino/a Studies*
- *Legal Studies*
- *Linguistics*
- *Literature*
- *Middle Eastern Studies*
- *Music*
- *Philosophy*
- *Political Science*
- *Religious Studies*
- *Russian and Eurasian Studies*
- *Science, Technology, and Society*
- *Theater Arts*
- *Urban Studies*
- *Women's and Gender Studies*
- *Writing*

## **Charge to the Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP) Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement**

The CUP Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR) shall consist of one faculty chair from the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS); and in addition, one faculty member from each of the five schools; two undergraduates; and *ex officio*, nonvoting members the Dean for Undergraduate Education, the Dean for SHASS or their designates. It is the responsibility of the CUP subcommittee on the HASS Requirement (SHR) to govern the Requirement as laid-out in the motion approved by the Faculty on May 20, 2009. This includes two high-level goals in the CUP charge:

- Support, encourage and monitor the development of new innovative subjects and changes to the HASS Requirement; and
- Ensure regular review of new and existing subjects to ascertain that the educational goals of the HASS Requirement are met while maintaining MIT's high educational standards.

To that end, subject to final approval by the CUP, the SHR shall act with power to:

- Monitor and revise policies associated with the HASS Requirement as necessary.
- Establish criteria and guidelines for the designation of subjects that will satisfy the HASS Requirement and adjust them as appropriate; evaluate subject proposals from all Schools for HASS designation and assign to appropriate categories in accordance with criteria.
- Establish criteria and guidelines for HASS Concentrations and adjust them as appropriate; review existing and approve new and modified Concentrations as needed.
- Maintain the official lists of HASS subjects and HASS Concentrations.
- Oversee individual student requests for exceptions or substitutions to the HASS Requirement, in collaboration with the CoC.
- Periodically collect and analyze data on patterns of student fulfillment of the Requirement, assess the student experience with the Requirement, and monitor the administration of the Requirement. Propose changes as needed based on such review.
- Interact and engage with departments and units in the development of innovative HASS curricula. Propose to the CUP limited educational experiments that SHR deems appropriate for assessing changes to the curriculum and educational policies and practices.

SHR will report to the CUP yearly and is encouraged to collaborate and communicate with departments across Schools, the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement, the Committee on Curricula, and others where appropriate, especially around subject proposals and curricular changes.

*Approved by the CUP  
September 21, 2016*

***Massachusetts Institute of Technology***  
**CUP SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE HASS REQUIREMENT**  
**Members Fall 2017-Spring 2019**

**Faculty and Administrative Members Including *ex officio***

Marah Gubar

Chair, Associate Professor, Literature (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

John Carroll

Sloan Representative, Gordon Kaufman Professor of Management (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

Aram Harrow

SoS Representative, Associate Professor, Physics (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

Timothy Hyde

SA+P Representative, Associate Professor, Architecture (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

David Jerison

SoS Representative, Professor, Mathematics (Fall 2017)

Emily Richmond-Pollock

SHASS Representative, Associate Professor, Music and Theater Arts (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

Gregory Rutledge

SoE Representative, Professor, Chemical Engineering (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)

Agustin Rayo

Associate Dean of SHASS, Professor, Philosophy (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

Tamar Schapiro

Designate for the Vice Chancellor, Associate Professor, Philosophy (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

**Undergraduate Student Members**

Emma Bernstein (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

Ian MacFarlane (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)

Charlotte Minsky (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

Henry Shackleton (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)

**Guest**

Andrea Wirth, SHASS Academic Administrator (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

**Staff**

Patricia Fernandes, Executive Officer to SHR (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

Jason Donath, Staff to SHR (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

Tom Scahill, Staff to SHR (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)

## Completed HASS Concentrations AY2007-AY2018

Field of Concentration	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009	Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018
African and African Diaspora Studies	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	2
American Studies	3	1	0	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	0	1
Ancient and Medieval Studies	3	5	8	8	10	6	9	4	9	15	8	5
Anthropology	20	19	15	17	14	12	12	14	14	12	23	15
Archaeology and Archaeological Science	9	5	6	11	3	7	7	9	6	4	10	5
Art, Culture, and Technology	10	9	14	10	10	11	10	14	9	6	11	10
Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies	23	22	23	15	19	15	21	18	22	10	16	27
Comparative Media Studies	30	33	29	26	26	31	38	35	69	46	55	48
Development Economics	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	0
Economics	354	330	342	318	284	234	230	263	219	221	241	249
Ethics	1	1	0	3	6	4	2	4	4	2	3	4
Ethnic Studies	1	1	1	0	0	na						
Global Studies and Languages	204	227	214	230	204	212	215	210	247	239	251	196
History	46	50	48	51	47	40	46	23	30	29	29	24
History of Architecture, Art, and Design	8	8	5	4	6	2	13	9	5	10	8	4
Labor in Industrial Society	0	1	1	0	0	na						
Latin American and Latino/a Studies	5	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	3	6	2	1
Legal Studies	na	0	0	3								
Linguistics	8	20	20	15	20	19	19	28	21	32	21	24
Literature	59	66	51	45	41	44	36	41	42	47	41	36
Middle Eastern Studies	1	1	4	2	5	1	0	0	1	0	3	2
Music	92	85	90	98	97	88	104	97	102	119	112	117
Philosophy	39	59	54	33	29	42	37	37	44	55	62	47
Physical Imagination (Dance)	0	0	0	0	1	1	na	na	na	na	na	na
Political Science	60	61	40	55	46	40	47	45	50	32	52	54
Psychology	44	49	47	39	48	44	46	54	43	43	39	8
Religious Studies	2	3	1	1	2	0	1	0	4	1	0	0
Russian and Eurasian Studies	0	3	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	5	6
Science, Technology, and Society (STS)	34	46	40	42	34	51	54	32	23	32	34	45
Theater Arts	32	19	19	17	24	23	32	40	49	49	65	52
Urban Studies	20	16	10	11	25	23	18	23	39	34	25	43
Women's and Gender Studies	12	11	18	10	8	15	23	15	15	23	22	21
Writing	36	43	38	46	26	34	32	29	36	45	30	29
Special Concentration	1	1	0	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	4
Chinese	32	38	54	51	46	47	49	51	53	48	45	30
English Language Studies	1	1	1	0	1	1	4	2	12	5	3	3
French	27	28	33	37	36	33	33	33	39	46	42	40
German	19	16	20	16	11	23	18	19	22	13	28	13
Japanese	30	35	37	32	26	36	38	36	27	40	30	37
Portuguese	0	0	0	1	3	7	6	6	9	10	4	4
Russian	na	1	1									
Spanish	78	94	57	84	71	50	59	55	75	65	78	48
Studies in International Literatures and Cultures (SILC)	5	3	7	4	3	4	2	3	1	4	4	3
Theory of Languages	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	2
Other Languages	11	10	2	4	6	10	5	4	8	6	13	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>196</b>

## Summary of Concentration Meetings

Field of Concentration	Meeting Date	Attendees	SHR Member Attendees
African & African Diaspora Studies	2/14/19	Fox Harrell	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar
American Studies	1/31/19	Christopher Capozzola	John Carroll, Marah Gubar
Ancient & Medieval Studies	10/16/18	Stephanie Frampton, Eric Goldberg	John Carroll, Marah Gubar
Anthropology	11/8/17	Christine Walley, Irene Hartford	John Carroll, Marah Gubar
Archaeology & Archaeological Science	11/30/18	Max Price	Timothy Hyde, Marah Gubar
Art, Culture & Technology	12/4/17	Azra Aksamija, Renée Caso, Hana Omiya	Emily Pollock, Marah Gubar
Asian & Asian Diaspora Studies	4/9/18	Hiromu Nagahara	Marah Gubar
Comparative Media Studies	12/13/17	Ed Schiappa, Rebecca Shepardson	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar
Development Economics	12/6/17	Jeffrey Harris, Gary King	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar
Economics	12/6/17	Jeffrey Harris, Gary King	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar
Ethics	2/26/18	Jack Spencer, Jen Purdy	Agustin Rayo, Marah Gubar
Global Studies & Languages*	3/26/18	Takako Aikawa, Ellen Crocker, Jane Dunphy, Amah Edoh, Emma Teng, Joyce Roberge	Emily Pollock, Marah Gubar
History	11/15/18	Sana Aiyar	Aram Harrow, Marah Gubar
History of Architecture, Art, & Design	11/15/17	Lauren Jacobi, Renée Caso, Kathaleen Brearley	Emily Pollock, Marah Gubar
Latin American & Latino Studies	5/7/2018	Tanalís Padilla	Agustin Rayo, Marah Gubar, Andrea Wirth
Legal Studies	1/31/19	Christopher Capozzola	John Carroll, Marah Gubar
Linguistics	4/6/18	Kai von Fintel, Jen Purdy	Timothy Hyde, Marah Gubar
Literature	10/18/18	Noel Jackson, Wyn Kelley, Stephen Tapscott, Daria Johnson	Emily Pollock, Marah Gubar
Middle Eastern Studies	12/20/18	Philip Houry	Aram Harrow, Marah Gubar
Music	12/13/17	Leslie Tilley, Nicole Paschal	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar
Philosophy	2/26/18	Jack Spencer, Jen Purdy	Agustin Rayo, Marah Gubar
Political Science	12/6/17	Devin Caughey, Tobie Weiner	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar
Religious Studies	11/8/17	Christine Walley, Irene Hartford	John Carroll, Marah Gubar
Russian & Eurasian Studies	4/9/18	Elizabeth Wood	Marah Gubar
Science, Technology, & Society (STS)	5/7/2018	Rosalind Williams, Karen Gardner	Agustin Rayo, Marah Gubar, Andrea Wirth
Theater Arts	12/11/17	Anna Kohler, Nicole Paschal	Emily Pollock, Marah Gubar
Urban Studies	11/15/17	Ezra Glenn, Ellen Rushman	David Jerison, Marah Gubar
Women's & Gender Studies	12/11/18	Elizabeth Wood, Emily Neill	Emily Pollock, Marah Gubar
Writing	12/13/17	Ed Schiappa, Rebecca Shepardson	Tamar Schapiro, Marah Gubar

* 11 fields of study under GSL
Chinese
English Language Studies
French
German
Japanese
Portuguese
Russian
Spanish
Other Languages
Studies in International Literatures and Cultures
Theory of Languages

## **HASS Concentration Review Questions for Concentration Advisors and HASS Administrators**

### **SHR's Goal for a HASS Concentration Review**

Collect information on how concentrations operate, including practices that work well and challenges faced.

### **High-level questions**

- *What are the goals and/or standards of success of your concentration?*
- *Describe your advising processes and the typical relationship you have with concentrators.*
- *Do concentrators have the opportunity to participate in a community? If yes, how?*
- *Describe your concentration's website and other associated materials you use to disseminate information to students.*
- *Are you happy with how your concentration is working?*
- *What challenges do you face as a Concentration Advisor?*
- *What can SHR do to help you as a Concentration Advisor?*

## HASS Concentration Review Guiding Questions

### SHR's Goal for a HASS Concentration Review

Collect information on how concentrations operate, including practices that work well and challenges faced.

### High level questions

- *What are the goals and/or standards of success of your concentration?*
- *Describe your advising processes and the typical relationship you have with concentrators.*
- *Do concentrators have the opportunity to participate in a community? If yes, how?*
- *Describe your concentration's website and other associated materials you use to disseminate information to students.*
- *Are you happy with how your concentration is working?*
- *What challenges do you face as a Concentration Advisor?*
- *What can SHR do to help you as a Concentration Advisor?*

### Advising

- Describe your advising process.
  - How do you typically interact with concentrators? And how much interaction do you have?
  - How often do you advise students on which subjects to take?
  - Describe the questions that students commonly ask about the concentration?
  - What steps do you take to ensure that students will be able to complete their concentrations as proposed?
  - Do you discuss the student's interests in the field?
  - Do you ask about minoring in the field? How often does your advice get taken?
- Describe the various paths students take to complete the concentration?
- What do you find students are most confused about?
- Describe the feedback you have received from students.
- How do students provide feedback?

### Administration

- Have there been any recent changes to the structure of the Concentration? If yes, what was the result?
- Do you track how often subjects within the concentration are offered?
- How is the Concentration publicized?
- Have you changed the way the Concentration is publicized? If yes, what was the result?
- Describe the content on the concentration website and its purpose.
- How is information passed on from one Concentration Advisor to the next?
- What kind of information about the Concentration is passed from Concentration Advisor to Concentration Advisor?
- What information would be helpful to new Concentration Advisors?

**Curricular**

- How often do students seek to substitute subjects not normally included within the concentration?
- How often do students choose subjects that are not categorized as HASS?
- How often do students choose subjects not taught at MIT?
- Do you invite concentrators to participate in extra-curricular activities?
- What is the rationale for requiring three or four subjects?

**Other**

- If you have not already done so, would you be interested in creating a community for your concentrators?
- What do you like about being a Concentration Advisor?
- Is there anything you would like to do as a Concentration Advisor but haven't been able to?

**SHR Review of HASS Concentrations**

Concentration Advisor meeting notes (in alphabetical order)

African and African Diaspora Studies ..... 2

American Studies..... 4

Ancient and Medieval Studies (AMS) ..... 6

Anthropology..... 8

Archaeology and Archaeological Sciences..... 10

Art, Culture and Technology (ACT) ..... 11

Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies..... 13

Comparative Media Studies (CMS)..... 15

Economics / Development Economics ..... 17

Global Studies and Languages (GSL)..... 19

History ..... 22

History of Architecture, Art, and Design ..... 24

Latin American and Latino/a Studies..... 26

Legal Studies..... 28

Linguistics ..... 30

Literature..... 32

Middle Eastern Studies..... 34

Music ..... 36

Philosophy / Ethics ..... 38

Political Science ..... 40

Religious Studies..... 42

Russian and Eurasian Studies ..... 44

Science, Technology, and Society (STS)..... 46

Theater Arts..... 48

Urban Studies ..... 50

Women and Gender Studies ..... 52

Writing..... 54

<b>African and African Diaspora Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 2/14/2019
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisors: Fox Harrell Academic Administrator: N/A SHR Members: Tamar Schapiro and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/african">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/african</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: The African and African Diaspora Studies Concentration offers a variety of subjects on the history, culture and structure of societies of African descent throughout the world, with special emphasis on those of the United States and the Caribbean. The purpose of the concentration is to allow students to focus critical and analytic attention on issues of concern to black communities of the Western hemisphere, to allow students to gain a wider appreciation of the dynamic nature of those communities, and to assist students to understand the historical, humanistic, political and social dimensions of ethnicity and race.

### Structure/Curriculum

Concentrators must complete four subjects, selected in consultation with the Concentration Advisor. Subject options are in categories such as Humanities and the Arts, Historical Studies, and Social Sciences.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Allow students to focus critical and analytic attention on issues of concern to black communities of the Western Hemisphere, to allow students to gain a wider appreciation of the dynamic nature of those communities, and to assist students to understand the historical, humanistic, political and social dimensions of ethnicity and race. Help students reconcile the difference between what society is telling them and their own reality.

### Advising

Most advising occurs over email, although the Concentration Advisor would like to meet with students face-to-face. In considering methods for encouraging those interactions in the future, the Concentration Advisor mentioned posting office hours on the Concentration's webpage as a way to encourage more face-to-face meetings.

### Publicity and Outreach

- SHASS Website
- Concentration Advisor teaches an Introductory subject – *Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies* – but does not advertise the concentration. This is something to consider going forward.

### Challenges

- Would like to attract a more varied demographic of students.
- Many concentrators trying to complete their concentration have to change up their final term subject option based on subject availability.
- The boundaries of this discipline are very blurry, can be difficult to be sure that a subject is the right fit for the Concentration.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations African and African Diaspora Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	0
2014	1
2015	0
2016	0
2017	0
2018	2

<b>American Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 1/31/19
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisors: Chris Capozzola Academic Administrator: N/A SHR Members: John Carroll and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/american">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/american</a>

### **Concentration Description**

From the website: You may be interested in American literature, folklore or popular culture; in black history and culture; in women’s studies; in American history, politics or law; in the history of science and technology; in American art, architecture or music—whatever the special focus of your interests, American Studies may be the right concentration for you. American Studies gives you a chance to study American society and culture through its history, literature, art, politics, science, music, etc. by constructing interdisciplinary programs, made up of subjects drawn from different disciplines, centered on your particular interests.

### **Structure/Curriculum**

Concentrators must complete four subjects, at least one must be in the Historical Studies category and one in the Literature category (variances are possible). Subject categories include: Humanities and the Arts; Social Sciences; Historical Studies; Literature; and Science Technology, and Society.

### **Goals and Standards of Success**

From the website: One aim of American Studies is to help you understand the underlying system of beliefs that informs every aspect of American culture—its myths, institutions, politics and literature, its characteristic dreams and rituals. Another is to understand the uses and limits of different methods and intellectual disciplines as tools for exploring the complexities of a culture. And a third, no less important, is to understand the American present in relation to the American past. To these you will add your own objectives.

### **Advising**

Most students who concentrate in American Studies, end up choosing the concentration simply because they naturally completed two or three of subjects that count towards the concentration. Generally, there is not much advising involved for this concentration. However, if a student is interested in American Studies, the Concentration Advisor will spend the time to discuss the student’s interests and plan out which subjects would best serve those interests. Most interactions with concentrators occur through the Online HASS Concentration Form.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

- SHASS Website
- There is no publicity or outreach for the American Studies Concentration, beyond what is done through the SHASS Dean’s Office.

### **Community Building**

Concentrators generally come to this concentration late and do not show much interest in being part of an American Studies community. Though, if they choose, the concentrators will affiliate with a community in one of the sub-categories of American Studies such as Literature or History. The Concentration Advisor is open to and likes the idea of developing a community for this group of students.

### **Challenges**

- Students typically are not aware of American Studies as a field of study.
- There is a concentration and a major, but no minor in American Studies.
- Students generally arrive at the concentration after they have completed three or four subjects (that fall under the concentration) – i.e., they complete the concentration without prior knowledge of the field of study.
- No real coherent group of faculty interested in supporting the concentration.
- Students have a lot of requirements for their majors and a lot of competing interests.
- Concentration lacks an introductory/gateway subject or capstone subject.

### **Number of Students with Completed Concentrations American Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	1
2014	3
2015	2
2016	3
2017	0
2018	1

<b>Ancient and Medieval Studies (AMS)</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 10/16/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisors: Stephanie Frampton and Eric Goldberg Academic Administrator: N/A SHR Members: John Carroll and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/ancient-medieval">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/ancient-medieval</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: Through a wide variety of subjects drawn from a number of disciplines, this program provides a curricular framework for exploring topics in ancient and medieval studies which range from the history of ideas and institutions to that of material artifacts, literature and certain of the original languages. The chronological span of the program includes some 6,500 years between 5000 B.C. and 1500 A.D.

### Structure/Curriculum

The concentration requirements consist of four subjects, at least one of which is to be taken in the medieval period by students whose focus is to be the Ancient World, or one in the ancient period by those whose focus is the Middle Ages. Subjects listed as Ancient and Medieval may count for either. At least two of the subjects taken towards the concentration must be taken at MIT. Concentrators may count up to two subjects in Greek or Latin or a medieval vernacular (taken at MIT or other institutions) towards the concentration.

### Goals and Standards of Success

- From the website: The goal of this program is to develop knowledge and understanding of the more distant past both for itself, in its uniqueness, and as an object of specifically modern questions and methods of inquiry. We are interested in the structure of institutions and social systems, and in relationships between the social order and learned traditions, values, ideologies and ideas. Ancient and medieval studies derive a special claim to our interest from the fact that the record is so full and multiform and that much of it is of exceptionally high quality at once in substance and form.
- They have a good number of concentrators but would like to have more. (Though some of them end up minoring in history or literature.)

### Advising

- The Concentration Advisors meet with most concentrators face-to-face and agree it would be nice to have face-to-face meetings by default. Although the Concentration Advisors typically already know the students because of their involvement in the AMS program, face-to-face meetings provide the opportunity to learn more about concentrator interests and allows for further discussion regarding minor or major options. Advising can be complex because of the many possible options – students can focus on ancient vs. medieval, history vs. literature, as well as language and architecture/art history option.
- Concentrations Advisors generally meet with concentrators once or twice. Although they know most concentrators from subjects they teach (*21H.007J/21L.014J Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies* is co-taught by the current Concentration Advisors) and from other AMS events the concentrators may attend.

**Publicity and Outreach**

- SHASS and AMS websites.
- Advertise with a flyer that includes a list of AMS subjects, which is given to colleagues to share with students.
- Advertise at the Tour de SHASS fair. They would like to have their own AMS table at additional academic fairs – Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation.

**Community Building**

- AMS hosts a colloquium series for interested students, concentrators, minors, and majors.
- Holds an annual barbeque for students that is enjoyable with decent turnout.
- IAP trips to Rome and Greece enthruses concentrators, minors, and majors. Faculty travel with the students on these annual trips and it’s a great way to get to know them more. Funding is available for students.

**Challenges**

- Although it’s not a requirement for the concentration, the language component of the program can be challenging. The lecturer who teaches Greek and Latin is funded through a donation and they are unsure how it will continue once that funding is gone.
- The Concentration Advisors would like to have an administrator who they could go to for assistance. For interdisciplinary programs, there should be more support and/or clarity on administrative resources. For example, generating lists of AMS students, planning for events, maintaining the AMS website, and building promotional materials are all challenging to get through without support.
- Greatest challenge is the funding process to run the various AMS events (including the long-standing colloquium series). This is a complex annual process that takes a lot of effort, and funding is not always guaranteed.

**Good Practices**

- All AMS faculty meet at least once a year to discuss the program.
- Good community building events.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Ancient and Medieval Studies (AMS)**

Class of	Completions
2013	9
2014	4
2015	9
2016	15
2017	8
2018	5

<b>Anthropology</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 11/08/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Christine Walley Academic Administrator: Irene Hartford SHR Members: John Carroll and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Graham Jones (Religious Studies)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://anthropology.mit.edu/undergraduate/requirements">http://anthropology.mit.edu/undergraduate/requirements</a>

### Concentration Description

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

### Structure/Curriculum

Three subjects total. One introductory subject: *21A.00 Introduction to Anthropology: Comparing Human Cultures* or *21A.01 How Culture Works*; then any two anthropology subjects (not to include 21A.00 or 21A.01). Anthropology does not use a curriculum committee.

### Goals and Standards of Success

The goals of each subject are instructor driven but students learn ethnographic methodologies in all Anthropology subjects. Many students will perform fieldwork, which may involve activities such as performing interviews to learn how people think about culture. The Concentration Advisor believes the concentration is working well, and there has been an increase in minors and majors over the last two years. Overall, enrollments are good.

### Advising

Each Anthropology faculty member takes a turn at the Concentration Advisor role. Overall, Concentration advising is fairly straightforward and not time intensive. The online form has streamlined the advising process. Advising mostly occurs through email, but there are face-to-face meetings too. Common questions from students are related to when subjects may or may not be taught. The Academic Administrator is the main source of institutional knowledge and knows when subjects will be taught.

### Publicity and Outreach

- Participate in academic fairs (Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation) and Tour de SHASS.
- Anthropology website.
- Created a video for the Anthropology website that describes the field of anthropology.

### Community Building

- Concentrators, minors, and majors are invited to various events held by Anthropology.
- Students enrolled in an anthropology subject are invited to discuss topics, informally and in more depth, when appropriate.
- Occasionally Anthropology will sponsor a “snack” discussion where students can come and enjoy snacks and talk about topics covered in class.
- The Academic Administrator emails students about various opportunities such as fellowships.

**Challenges**

- Students do not have much experience with anthropology and can be reluctant to try something new. However, once students take a subject, they generally like the discipline.
- Office location is a little out of the way for some students (E53).
- Both students and faculty seem overwhelmed, which can dampen community building activities efforts.
- Would like for the Online HASS Concentration Form system to email the Academic Administrator when students propose/complete a concentration. Would like to check to be sure that the proposed plan is feasible – subjects being offered.

**Good Practices**

- Created a video to advertise Anthropology to students.
- Occasionally Anthropology will sponsor a “snack” discussion where students can come and enjoy snacks and talk about topics covered in class.
- Email students about various academic opportunities.
- Rotate Concentration Advisor responsibilities through all the unit’s faculty.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Anthropology**

Class of	Completions
2013	12
2014	14
2015	14
2016	12
2017	23
2018	15

<b>Archaeology and Archaeological Sciences</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 11/30/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Max Price SHR Members: Timothy Hyde and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/hass/concentration/archaeology">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/hass/concentration/archaeology</a>

**Concentration Description**

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

**Structure/Curriculum**

Four subjects total. Students must take *3.986 The Human Past: Introduction to Archaeology* and *3.985J/5.24J/12.011J Archaeological Science*. Students must then choose two other HASS subjects from a prescribed list. These subjects can be taken in any order.

**Goals and Standards of Success**

To introduce students to archaeology, archaeological methods and materials science. Additionally, to introduce students to how cultures vary across the world.

**Advising**

Advising is very straightforward and is done almost exclusively through the Online HASS Concentration Form. Although the Concentration Advisor is happy to meet with students to help answer questions. Subjects outside of those listed are occasionally accepted for the concentration.

**Publicity and Outreach**

Introductory subjects enroll a lot of students and feature a number of guest lecturers. The program typically does not participate in academic fairs (Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation), however, the Concentration Advisor plans to participate going forward.

**Community Building**

The Concentration Advisor is interested in creating a field program (archaeological dig) for students. He's working on this idea.

**Challenges**

Being a small HASS program within an engineering department, there are inherent administrative support challenges. Additionally, there are challenges in having a concentration administered by a lecturer.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Archaeology and Archaeological Sciences**

Class of	Completions
2013	7
2014	9
2015	6
2016	4
2017	10
2018	5

<b>Art, Culture and Technology (ACT)</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/04/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Azra Aksamija Academic Administrators: Renée Caso and Hana Omiya SHR Members: Emily Richmond-Pollock and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: N/A
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://architecture.mit.edu/art-culture-and-technology/degree/undergraduate#HASS-concentration-in-ACT">https://architecture.mit.edu/art-culture-and-technology/degree/undergraduate#HASS-concentration-in-ACT</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: The Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT) offers a diverse range of subjects from classes exploring media that include photography, video and sound, to examinations of cinema, public art, and the intersections of art and culture in the public sphere.

### Structure/Curriculum:

The ACT Concentration requires four subjects; three from the Art, Culture and Technology group and one from the History of Architecture, Art, and Design group. Students may major in Course 4 and concentrate in ACT. Students often take either *4.301 Introduction to Artistic Experimentation*, *4.302 Foundations in Art, Design, and Spatial Practices*, or *4.341 Introduction to Photography and Related Media* as their first subject in the concentration.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Students should develop a critical mindset through the lens of an artist, learning empathy by studying other cultures and how society and its changes can be reflected through art. Students should also learn how art can be a commentary on policy, the use of technology, and the ethics of technology.

### Advising

- The Concentration Advisor most often leaves comments using the Online HASS Concentration Form, although she will meet students upon request. Students generally know which subjects they want to take, although, they may have questions about the various paths.
- Subject suggestions are made with the goal of enhancing the students' understanding of their field of study. For example, students who take journalism subjects may be advised to take photography to enhance/compliment their understanding of journalism.
- Students are able to take subjects outside of the listed concentration subjects. The Concentration Advisor encourages students to choose a constellation of subjects that may augment their major area of study and/or create a logical curricular path through the HASS Requirement.
- The Concentration Advisor is well supported by the Academic Administrator and Academic Assistant.

### Publicity and Outreach

- Not much is done for outreach. Students often take one subject as their HASS-A and enjoy the experience; then decide to take more subjects and concentrate, minor, or even major.
- They have considered advertising in The Tech and in Lobby 10.

**Community Building**

- At the subject level, students enjoy going out to museums and having on-site visits.
- The Concentration Advisor collaborates with Arts at MIT to hold public events.
- Held a pop-up event for a wearables subject.
- More events on the graduate side – concern that mixing graduate and undergraduate students could create challenges for undergraduates.
- Will look into emailing concentrators to invite them to events.

**Challenges**

- Lack of more traditional fine arts subjects such as drawing and painting.
- Some students are nervous about taking more advanced visual arts subjects.
- Concentrators produce work/objects but there is no space to display it. Displaying work is an important part of the creation process and concentrators are missing out on that piece.
- A social space in general for concentrators to gather would be great.

**Good Practices**

- Advising and focus on how a student’s concentration can be used to enhance the HASS Requirement and/or major.
- Course 4 is in the process of hiring new faculty and lecturers for ACT, which means some changes are coming in terms of ability to offer subjects.
- Subject descriptions are fairly thematic, which helps draw students in.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT)**

Class of	Completions
2013	10
2014	14
2015	9
2016	6
2017	11
2018	10

<b>Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 04/09/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Hiromu Nagahara Academic Administrator: N/A SHR Members: Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Elizabeth Wood (Russian and Eurasian Studies)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/asian">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/asian</a>

### **Concentration Description**

From the website: The Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies Concentration is designed for students interested in the languages, history, politics, and cultures of Asia and the Asian diasporas. The geographical region of Asia includes countries such as Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. In consultation with the Concentration Advisor, students may focus their coursework on a sub-region of Asia, the Asian diasporas, or design their program to offer a comparative study across different regions and/or cultural groups.

### **Structure/Curriculum**

Four subjects total, with no more than three from a single area of study. Areas of study include Language, Historical Studies, Humanities and the Arts, and Social Sciences.

### **Goals and Standards of Success**

The concentration is aimed at students who want to learn about the region more broadly. Students have a lot of freedom to pursue their interests and can upgrade the concentration to a minor or major. Most students combine the Language area of study with either Historical Studies or Humanities and the Arts.

### **Advising**

- The Online HASS Concentration Form has lessened the need for face-to-face meetings.
- The concentration overlaps with other language studies concentrations.
- Students have the option to take a variety of subjects, beyond language subjects, to complete the concentration.
- If a student is interested in an area that the Concentration Advisor does not have expertise, he will set up a meeting with a colleague who can provide appropriate counsel.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

SHASS website.

### **Community Building**

Concentrators have a very disparate set of interests and are more often drawn to participate in the Asian language communities and/or MISTI.

**Challenges**

- No clear ownership of the interdisciplinary concentration, which makes the administration of the program challenging.
- Very broad concentration that could use more oversight from the faculty with expertise in the various concentration areas. (The current advisor's area of expertise does not overlap with much with the other areas.) A case could be made that specific regions or countries should have their own concentrations. Although, the broadness of the concentration allows for non-dominant countries to be studied as part of a concentration.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	21
2014	18
2015	22
2016	10
2017	16
2018	27

<b>Comparative Media Studies (CMS)</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/13/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Edward Schiappa Academic Administrator: Rebecca Shepardson SHR Members: Tamar Schapiro and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Leslie Tilley and Nicole Paschal (Music)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://cmsw.mit.edu/education/comparative-media-studies/undergraduate/">https://cmsw.mit.edu/education/comparative-media-studies/undergraduate/</a>

### Description

From the website: The undergraduate program in Comparative Media Studies offers students an opportunity for interdisciplinary study of film, television, game design, virtual worlds, digital artworks, civic media, interactive writing, and other communications media.

### Structure/Curriculum

The Comparative Media Studies Concentration requires four classes from a prescribed list of [CMS required and elective classes](#).

### Goals and Standards of Success

Written response from CMS (sent prior to meeting): A successful concentration is one in which students are more satisfied (or at least as satisfied) with their class choices and opportunity to explore Humanities at MIT than they would have been if their choice of classes within SHASS has been left entirely open. Our goal is to provide accessible and clear information on the concentration we offer, and prompt and thorough answers to their questions.

Ideally some students might be inspired to extend their concentration into a minor or even major, and we are happy to discuss this with them, but we don't judge the success of the concentration based on this.

### Advising

In-person meetings are not required nor needed. Not too many students choose to meet with the Concentration Advisor. If the subjects a student proposes and completes are from the list of classes that count towards the concentration, then the forms are approved. The Concentration Advisor and Academic Administrator are available for consultation via email or in person.

### Publicity and Outreach

- CMS website.
- Handouts and emailing for events.

### Community Building

Concentrators are welcome to attend CMS events such as the CMS Colloquium. A concentrator mailing list was used for event announcements, but this has fallen away with the Online HASS Concentration Form. CMS would like to use the new system to send out event announcements, but the Concentration Advisor was not sure if that is an appropriate use of the system.

**Challenges**

- Lack of resources or central repository of information to help students create or maintain “clubs” or extra-curricular activities.
- Not having the opportunity to learn how students perceive certain subjects is one drawback of not meeting with students in person.
- Concentrators are a very diverse population. Games, design, film, lots of possibilities.
- Struggle to motivate faculty to teach introductory subjects – wrote a charge for the curriculum committee to help address this issue.
- Students find the rule specifying that only one subject can count towards both the Distribution Component and the Concentration Component of the HASS Requirement confusing, and, in some cases, a challenge. This may come up for CMS more often than other HASS units because CMS offers subjects in every distribution category.
- Reported that the Online HASS Concentration Form application load time is very slow.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations Comparative Media Studies Concentration (CMS)**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	38
2014	35
2015	69
2016	46
2017	55
2018	48

<b>Economics / Development Economics</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/06/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Jeffrey Harris Academic Administrator: Gary King SHR Members: Tamar Schapiro and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Devin Caughey and Tobie Weiner (Political Science)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://economics.mit.edu/under/concentrate">http://economics.mit.edu/under/concentrate</a> (Economics); <a href="http://economics.mit.edu/under/concentrated">http://economics.mit.edu/under/concentrated</a> (Development Economics)

### Concentration Description

**Economics:** N/A – Description is not present on the website.

**Development Economics:** From the website: The concentration in development economics would be well suited for students who are interested in studying the challenge posed by massive and persistent world poverty and in learning how the tools of economics can be used to shape policies designed to remedy this serious social problem.

### Structure/Curriculum

**Economics:** Three subjects total: *14.01 Principles of Microeconomics* and/or *14.02 Principles of Macroeconomics* and then select one or two other subjects (from a list of about 25) offered in economics. Students may not take *14.30 Introduction to Statistical Methods* in Economics or *14.32 Econometric Data Science*. Students with a primary major in Course 14 cannot concentrate in economics.

**Development Economics:** Three subjects total: *14.73 The Challenge of World Poverty* and *14.01 Principles of Microeconomics* and then either *14.74 Foundations of Development Policy* or *14.75 Political Economy and Economic Development*. An acceptable alternate set of subjects would be 14.01, 14.74, and 14.75.

### Goals and Standards of Success

To build a foundation in economics, students learn quantitative methods in either microeconomics or macroeconomics. Students are then free to take two more economics subjects in topics that interest them. The standard for the concentration's success is based on the number of students that choose to concentrate in it.

### Advising

- Due to the high number of concentrators, one-on-one advising is not realistic. However, if a student wants to meet, the Concentration Advisor makes himself available. Most students are able to determine their path through the concentration based on the information on the website.
- Students often send the Concentration Advisor an email once they have submitted their Online HASS Concentration Form, which leads to some advising through the form and via email.
- The Academic Administrator used to do a lot of advising and reviewing of paper concentration forms before the implementation of the Online HASS Concentration Form.
- Students often revise their concentrations as their class schedules evolve.

### Publicity and Outreach

Economics website.

**Community Building**

All majors, minors, and concentrators are invited to department events, such as talks and open houses. The size of the program allows for a robust community. The events generally have about 30-50 attendees.

**Challenges**

- Deadline can be difficult with so many concentrators. Students sometimes propose inappropriate or incomplete subject configurations for their concentrations, which can make advising while adhering to the deadline difficult.
- Would prefer more Course 14 subjects to be CI-H – encourage more critical thinking.
- Some students have trouble with the Online HASS Concentration Form – e.g., they cancel it by accident.

**Good Practices**

Invite concentrators to events with majors and minors.

**Number of Students with a Completed Concentrations in Economics and Development Economics**

Class of	Economics Completions	Development Economics Completions
2013	230	0
2014	263	2
2015	219	0
2016	221	1
2017	241	1
2018	249	0

<b>Global Studies and Languages (GSL)</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 03/26/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisors: Takako Aikawa, Ellen Crocker, Jane Dunphy, Amah Edoh, Maria Khotimsky, and Emma Teng Academic Administrator: Joyce Roberge SHR Members: Emily Richmond-Pollock and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://mitgsl.mit.edu/academics">http://mitgsl.mit.edu/academics</a>

### Concentration Description

There are general descriptions for each area of study on the individual webpages of the GSL website. For concentration information, you must click through the requirements link for every area of study. The concentration descriptions state how to complete a concentration for the specified option.

### Structure/Curriculum

Five different options:

- Level I through IV in a language group – four subjects.
- Level II through IV in a language group – three subjects.
- Two subjects at Level IV or above, and one more relevant subject in Studies in International Literatures and Cultures (SILC).
- Theory of Languages – Coursework in two languages Level IV or above, and one subject in Theory of Languages.
- SILC – Three SILC subjects that form a coherent unit.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Students often concentrate in a foreign language in order to study abroad, qualify for an internship, and/or a MISTI program. Students would benefit from visiting and immersing themselves in the culture of the country where the language they learned is spoken.

From the GSL Academic Guide: “Whether majoring in the sciences, engineering, management, or other fields, today’s students need to be equipped to work in the global context. GSL provides a wealth of coursework in international languages, cultures, media, and history – promoting the critical thinking skills, intellectual curiosity, and cross-cultural understanding that prepare students for this new environment.”

### Advising

- Languages – There are generally two language tracks that students complete. Four semesters of a language or a language track that includes a cultural component (usually students who come in with intermediate language skills already). Most concentrators take the language track.
- Students begin languages with different backgrounds and levels of preparation. The instructor of the subject they first attend will attempt to place them at the right language level.
- Chinese Language has a streamlined (some background) and regular (no background) track for students. Placement of students into the right level and track can be difficult. It takes a lot of resources to test and determine the right track.
- SILC – If students take two language subjects and take a third cultural subject, the advisor works to ensure that there is a coherent grouping of subjects. There are a wide range of subject options available to students working to complete this concentration. If language subjects are not part of the concentration, the advisor ensures that there is thematic or regional coherence in the grouping.

- English Language Studies has a small number of students and most of the subjects provide instruction in professional communication genres. The concentration includes some SILC subjects as well.
- Online HASS Concentration Form has been very helpful.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

- Participate in Academic Fairs, including Orientation and Campus Preview Weekend.
- Invite MISTI German students to visit students in the early German language subjects to talk about their experience.
- The Japanese program has close ties with MISTI Japan. MISTI Japan holds events and the Japanese program advertises subjects at those events.
- The Academic Administrator developed a brochure to advertise the foreign language programs. The brochure includes information on why students should take a language and visit foreign countries.
- Hold information sessions in the fall and reach out to concentrators to let them know about minoring and majoring in foreign languages.
- Put a booth in Lobby 10 during pre-registration to help advertise the GSL programs.
- Encouraged students to share personal stories about how their choice of concentration affected their lives. These stories will be shared on the GSL website.

### **Community Building**

- Award for excellence – students are invited to attend an award ceremony where students are awarded for exceptional performance.
- German Language – Every year a student wins an Excellence in German Studies award. This is an event that other German language students receive invitations for. The winner of the award gets a free flight to Germany paid for by Lufthansa.
- GSL partners with the Language Conversation Exchange.

### **Challenges**

- First-year students can have difficulty taking a foreign language subject because of the first-year credit limit. Additionally, during the fall semester, students are typically advised to take a CI-H subject and therefore may eschew a foreign language until their spring semester or sophomore year. This can create a gap in language instruction for students with high school experience. It may also end up being a little late for students to take full advantage of all the benefits of taking a language, joining a MISTI program, and studying abroad.
- Scheduling subjects when students are available to take them.
- Language subjects are usually taken in a sequence that adds constraints to what and when students can take subjects.
- Offering subjects during IAP is resource intensive and students may find a subject that meets four days a week too time consuming.
- Some First-year and Major Advisors don't fully understand the HASS Requirement and that a concentration in a foreign language also counts towards this.
- English Language Studies – Students often resent that they have to take ESL subjects. These students have a baseline level of English language skills, but not equivalent to the majority of students admitted to MIT.
- High number of concentrators in Spanish Language is challenging for the Concentration Advisor to manage.
- Would like to have a dedicated space for events. It's difficult to get space for the various award ceremonies. A film screening room would be nice to have as well.
- HASS is not seen as a priority for students.

**Good Practices**

- GSL does a lot for publicity and outreach. Their connection to other programs – e.g., MISTI, is also great for community building.
- Offering some language subjects during IAP.
- Subject listings are always up to date for students.
- Offers a film series that includes movies in French and Portuguese.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Global Studies and Languages (GSL)**

Class of	Chinese	ESL	French	German	Japanese	Portuguese	Russian	Spanish	SILC	Theory of Languages	Other
2013	49	4	33	18	38	6	N/A	59	2	1	5
2014	51	2	33	19	36	6	N/A	55	3	1	4
2015	53	12	39	22	27	9	N/A	75	1	1	8
2016	48	5	46	13	40	10	N/A	65	4	2	6
2017	45	3	42	28	30	4	1	78	4	3	13
2018	30	3	40	13	37	4	1	48	3	2	15

<b>History</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 11/15/2018
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Sana Aiyar Academic Administrators: Meghan Pepin SHR Members: Aram Harrow and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://history.mit.edu/undergraduate">http://history.mit.edu/undergraduate</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: "The past is not behind us; in fact it isn't even past". Although most people at MIT look to the future, we can't tell where we're going without knowing where we've been. MIT's historians examine nearly the entire range of human experience in order to provide perspective on the present.

You can explore a wide range of subjects in small classes featuring close interaction with outstanding scholars and teachers. History at MIT does not look like a high school survey; instead of memorizing names and dates, you learn to think critically about important issues and to develop a rich, empathetic understanding of our ancestors. Texts, visuals and aural media, lectures and discussions work together to make vivid the experience of men and women who have lived here before us.

The study of History teaches different ways to think critically about the past, present and future of the world. When paired with an MIT background in science and engineering, a major or minor in history can lead to a variety of employment and graduate school opportunities. Some of our graduates have gone on to do advanced work in History at the nation's top programs, but others have undertaken graduate work in other academic fields in the Humanities and elsewhere or gone on to graduate work and careers in fields such as law or business. A [Los Angeles Times op-ed](#) piece in May 2016 notes that "the study of History opens a variety of career paths, and teaches the nuanced analytical skills that will be in demand throughout careers undertaken in the first half of the twenty-first century." Those interested in post-undergraduate opportunities for History students should consult [Careers for History Majors](#), a web site compiled by the American Historical Association.

### Structure/Curriculum

A concentrator is required to take three subjects: one introductory subject and then two additional subjects, one of which can also be introductory. There are no geographical distribution requirements. At least two of the subjects must be taken at MIT.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Get students interested in the introductory level subjects and then get them to think about a minor or major.

### Advising

- Ask students to explore their diverse interests in history, covering different parts of the world.
- Instructors share the schedule of subject offerings each term to students in their classes.
- Mostly advise through the Online HASS Concentration Form. Sometimes students have questions or make changes to their proposal by substituting a subject.
- Students cannot major and concentrate in history.

**Publicity and Outreach**

- Website.
- Academic fairs – Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation.
- If students show interest, the instructor will walk students to the History Office to provide them with more information.
- Targeted advertising to various student groups, such as the Black Students Union.
- Rent advertising space on the various screens around campus.
- Involved in MISTI and the Burchard Scholars Program.

**Community Building**

- SHASS UAAs will be putting on a tacos and t-shirt event to attract majors, minors, and concentrators.
- Do have 3-4 history talks a year, which students can attend.
- The IAP trips are very popular with students.

**Challenges**

- Scheduling subjects that students can fit into their schedules.
- Would love to have a student lounge where students could hang out.

**Good Practices**

- Provide the intellectual rationale for studying history on the website, along with how to minor and major in history.
- Offer a number of flagship HEX subjects, that are team taught by a rotating group of faculty. This provides students with an opportunity to get to know multiple faculty and understand various perspectives and may motivate students to take another history subject.
- Use a lot of guest lecturers in history subjects.
- Advertise the smaller class size, students seem to like it.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in History**

Class of	Completions
2013	46
2014	23
2015	30
2016	29
2017	29
2018	24

<b>History of Architecture, Art, and Design</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 11/15/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Lauren Jacobi Academic Administrators: Renée Caso and Kathaleen Brearley SHR Members: Emily Richmond-Pollock and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://architecture.mit.edu/history-theory-and-criticism/degree/undergraduate#HASS-Concentration-in-HTC">https://architecture.mit.edu/history-theory-and-criticism/degree/undergraduate#HASS-Concentration-in-HTC</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: The History Theory and Criticism of Architecture and Art (HTC) discipline group teaches subjects that deal with the history of architecture and art, as well as the theoretical and political presuppositions informing that history. Offerings range in content and method. Some are motivated by questions derived from the problems of contemporary practice. Others investigate a body of historical material in ways that develop analytical skills.

The HASS Concentration Requirement encourages students to develop a more mature understanding of a field in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. This experience is not as intensive as majoring or minoring in a field, but it does provide a good understanding of subject matter and methodologies used outside the natural sciences and engineering.

### Structure/Curriculum

- The HASS Concentration in History of Architecture, Art and Design is composed of four subjects from two groups of study. Three subjects in the History of Architecture, Art and Design group and one subject in Art, Culture and Technology group.
- With the Concentration Advisor's approval, students can choose to take subjects not listed in the subject groups.
- Students who major in this field can also concentrate in it.

### Goals and Standards of Success

- Provide students with a sophisticated understanding of art history and an elevated understanding of artistic methodologies and approaches. Students will learn a lifelong appreciation of art that cannot be learned within STEM fields.
- There are currently about 13 concentrators. 10-13 concentrators a year is a good number, would like to have 20 at the most.

### Advising

- First contact with students often occurs with the email notification from the Online HASS Concentration Form. Intention is to meet with students, but that does not always happen. The Concentration Advisor is considering options to help encourage face-to-face meetings.
- The faculty in this area all share a suite. Concentration Advisor changes every four years or so and the Academic Administrator helps with continuity.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

- Students generally take a History Theory and Criticism of Architecture and Art (HTC) subject because they need a HASS-A, and then they decide that they like the field of study.
- The Concentration Advisor is considering outreach options such as creating posters and reviewing the profile of concentrators to learn what kinds of students are attracted to the concentration.
- To learn more about student perception of the concentration, the Concentration Advisor is considering whether to survey students. Informal feedback from students is positive.

### **Community Building**

The Concentration Advisor is considering whether to invite concentrators to graduate events – working towards building a more substantial sense of community through graduate and undergraduate collaboration.

### **Challenges**

- Would like to be more methodical about how students find the concentration and the first subject they take in the field.
- Students sometimes have technical difficulty with the HASS Concentration Form and cross-registered subjects.

### **Good Practices**

- HTC does not have a formal curriculum committee, they do, however, plan the curriculum. If a faculty member is not available to teach a subject that fulfills multiple requirements (major, minor, concentration), lecturers may be hired to fill in.
- A staff member provides continuity for when new Concentration Advisors come on board.

### **Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in History of Architecture, Art, and Design**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	13
2014	9
2015	5
2016	10
2017	8
2018	4

<b>Latin American and Latino/a Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 05/17/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Tanalis Padilla Academic Administrator: Andrea Wirth SHR Members: Agustin Rayo and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Rosalind Williams and Karen Gardner (STS)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/latin-american">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/latin-american</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: The Latin American and Latino/a Studies Concentration is designed for students interested in the language, history, politics and culture of Latin America and of Hispanics living in the U.S.

### Structure/Curriculum

Four subjects from a prescribed list, including no more than two from a single discipline (Anthropology/Politics/Archaeology and Material Science/History; and Language/Literature/Arts) and no more than one focused on the Iberian Peninsula. (Students may choose not to take a subject focused on the Iberian Peninsula.) A minimum of three of the four subjects must be MIT subjects. Subjects are also available from Harvard and Wellesley through cross-registration. Students must receive permission from the Concentration Advisor before registering for a class at another institution.

Students who want to minor in Latin American and Latino/a Studies have to complete *17.55J Introduction to Latin American Studies*.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Students should approach Latin America from different perspectives/disciplines.

### Advising

The Concentration Advisor is fairly new in the role and has met with only one student thus far.

### Publicity and Outreach

Website.

### Community building

- The Concentration Advisor is building relationships with students, in the subjects she teaches, who may choose to concentrate.
- Many students who seem interested in a concentration in Latin American and Latino/a Studies live in the same dorm and have invited the Concentration Advisor to dinner.

### Challenges

- The introductory subject that students may have taken as a pathway into the concentration was not regularly offered. It is now taught regularly.
- Students should select their HASS subjects with more deliberateness.
- Students do appear to believe in the importance of the HASS Requirement.
- Get students involved in publicizing the importance of HASS.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Latin American and Latino/a Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	1
2014	2
2015	3
2016	6
2017	2
2018	1

<b>Legal Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 01/31/2019
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Chris Capozzola Academic Administrator: NA SHR Members: John Carroll and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/legal">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/legal</a>

### **Concentration Description**

From the website: The Legal Studies Concentration introduces students to the academic field of legal studies. Scholars in legal studies draw on disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. The concentration likewise expects students to sample the breadth of legal studies as an interdisciplinary field by exploring the law from multiple perspectives.

Students will study legal texts and practices, the role of law in processes of social change, and the relationship of law to other forms of intellectual inquiry. Concentrators will develop analytical skills commonly associated with legal reasoning, gain an understanding of the practice of law in the United States and other nations, and explore law's relationship to social structures such as politics, economics, and identity.

### **Structure/Curriculum**

The concentration requires four subjects, selected in consultation with the Concentration Advisor, with at least two from the Law and Social Science subfield. The subfield categories are: Theory and Philosophy of Law; Law and Social Science; and Law and Policy. Students may also count subjects taken through Wellesley and Harvard cross-registration with permission from the Concentration Advisor.

### **Goals and Standards of Success**

Make visible to undergraduates that Legal Studies exists across multiple disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. This concentration should provide students some knowledge of what it is like to study law and prepare them, if they desire, for further study in law school.

### **Advising**

The Concentration Advisor meets all of the concentrators and gets to know them fairly well. He helps concentrators select subjects that match their interests in law. If an MIT subject is not sufficient, the Concentration Advisor will suggest that concentrators take subjects at Harvard if appropriate. Overall, face-to-face-advicing seems more appropriate at the proposal stage, but unnecessary at the completion stage.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

Most concentrators take *21H.227 Constitutional Law in US History* and get to know the Concentration Advisor who teaches the subject.

### **Community building**

The Career Advising & Professional Development Office does some pre-law advising, which contributes to a sense of community for these students. In general, students interested in pre-law should get to know each other. Often, clubs or societies will become popular depending on student interest. The Office of the General Counsel can also be a source for community.

### Challenges

- Not enough subjects being taught in the field of study.
- Additional faculty who teach subjects in the field of study would be helpful.
- Intensive advising to match student interest.

### Good Practices

Take advantage of existing structures to create community, such as Career Advising & Professional Development, Office of the General Counsel, and other relevant organizations.

### Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Legal Studies

Class of	Completions
2013	NA
2014	NA
2015	NA
2016	0
2017	0
2018	3

<b>Linguistics</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 04/06/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Kai von Fintel Academic Administrator: Jennifer Purdy SHR Members: Timothy Hyde and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://linguistics.mit.edu/concentration/">http://linguistics.mit.edu/concentration/</a>

**Concentration Description**

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

**Structure/Curriculum**

Three subjects, which must include:

- [24.900](#) (Introduction to Linguistics) (CI-H) or [24.9000](#) (How Language Works)
- one subject chosen from [24.901](#) (Phonology), [24.902](#) (Syntax), or [24.903](#) (Semantics)
- one other subject in linguistics (might include but not limited to the subjects listed above)

**Goals and Standards of Success**

Students usually do not have any experience with linguistics in high school. They often do not wonder about grammar and the theory of grammar. In 24.900 students are exposed to these concepts. In the concentration, students learn about two of the following core components of linguistics: syntax, phonology, and semantics. They hope that students remain interested and decide to minor or major.

**Advising**

The concentration structure and options is very clear. Students do not require much if any advising. The Concentration Advisor is happy to talk with students, but this is generally unnecessary.

**Publicity and Outreach**

- Advertise 24.900, which is a popular CI-H subject. Students can also take 24.9000, which does not include the CI-H designation.
- Talk to prospective students when they visit.
- The introductory subjects have guest speakers to lecture on their area of expertise and to talk about the subjects they teach.
- Administrator emails students who do well in the introductory subjects and encourages them to take other subjects in linguistics.

**Community building**

It depends on the group. They tried to have a dinner for concentrators but the students were not interested in attending.

**Challenges**

Students don't know what linguistics is when they come to MIT.

**Good Practices**

- Try to schedule subjects when students are not taking the Science Core.
- The introductory subjects have guest speakers to lecture on their area of expertise and to talk about the subjects they teach.
- Administrator emails students who do well in the introductory subjects and encourages them to take other subjects in linguistics.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Linguistics**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	19
2014	28
2015	21
2016	32
2017	21
2018	24

<b>Literature</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 10/18/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Noel Jackson, Wyn Kelley, and Stephen Tapscott Academic Administrators: Daria Johnson and Alicia Mackin (Administrative Officer) SHR Members: Emily Richmond-Pollock and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://lit.mit.edu/concentrate-in-literature/">https://lit.mit.edu/concentrate-in-literature/</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: Students come to Literature to fulfill their concentrations for many reasons. Some love to read great books, plays, or poems, or want to explore film and media studies. Some wish to hone their skills in thinking and writing about literary questions. Others enjoy participating in lively discussion in small classes. Many have favorite authors or periods they want to know better. We accommodate all levels of interest in literature. Many students go on to Minor or Major in Literature after completing a concentration. We try to make that progression as seamless as possible.

### Structure/Curriculum

The requirements for a Literature Concentration are three subjects, including one subject from the Intermediate tier (400-, 500-, 600) and one subject from the Seminar (700-) tier. Two six-unit Samplings courses may be combined by petition to count as one Intermediate-tier subject for the purposes of a concentration. The Literature Faculty strongly recommends the addition of a fourth subject as a way of increasing the intellectual depth and range of a student's literary experience.

Certain subjects in Writing and Humanistic Studies, Global Studies and Languages, and History may also qualify as part of a Literature Concentration when taken as a third (or fourth) subject beyond the two required subjects in Literature.

### Goals and Standards of Success

- One goal is to build a community for students. The Academic Administrator works hard to build student enthusiasm for participation in various events throughout the year.
- Another goal is to build maturity in student critical thinking and writing by building on a foundation created early in the concentration.

### Advising

- Almost all students are required to meet face-to-face with a Concentration Advisor. Concentration Advisors are concerned that students do not have enough faculty contact and believe that this is one way to do their part to facilitate that interaction.
- Face-to-face meetings provide the opportunity to tell students about minor and major options in Literature.
- There are a lot of different paths through the Literature Concentration and advising is important to help students choose a coherent set of subjects that best align with their interests.
- When students fill out the Online HASS Concentration Form, they are asked to list the coherence and explain their choices on the form.
- Concentration Advisors previously created a "roadmap" through the Concentration but students took it too literally.
- Concentration Advisors usually do not require students to meet for completion of the concentration.

- Instructors will waive prerequisites in many cases, which is another reason for the importance of meeting with Concentration Advisors.

**Publicity and Outreach**

- Website.
- The Academic Administrator is always trying new ways to get students to participate in outings. She advertises in Literatures subjects, will talk to students when she sees them, and stresses the importance of a minor on resumes.
- Literature always has a booth at the various academic fairs – Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation.

**Community Building**

- Literature Tea (Lit Tea) is a very successful (about 24 per year) event for all interested students and alumni. Students participate in interesting conversations at this weekly event and a lot of student mentoring occurs.
- Invite concentrators to outings for minors and major. Will hold activities such as bowling and reading groups (Mobile Marathon).

**Challenges**

- Face-to-face meetings were easier to justify when students had to have their paper Concentration Forms signed.
- First-year advisors sometimes provide students uneven advice about the HASS Requirement and concentrations.
- Students may take subjects that fit their schedule instead of subjects that they are interested in.
- Students think of Literature as “English,” which is a myth. The discipline more diverse.
- Students want to have the same Concentration Advisor from the start to finish of the concentration and this can be challenging with Concentration Advisor rotation. Concentration Advisors will now have longer terms of service to address this issue.
- Would like a dedicated space for students, such as a lounge. A locked room with a coffee maker and couches (Hayden Library?).
- Faculty would like more “mixers” with STEM faculty to get to know them and talk to them about advising for HASS.

**Good Practices**

- Employ three Concentration Advisors to ease the load off of individual advisors, which is high because they meet most students face-to-face. This also ensures that at least somebody will be available to meet with a student or review a submitted form.
- Using google docs to track student information (name, subjects taken, notes). This is helpful information to pass on to the next set of Concentration Advisors.
- Advertise next semesters subjects by visiting classrooms and describing them to students.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Literature**

Class of	Completions
2013	36
2014	41
2015	42
2016	47
2017	41
2018	36

<b>Middle Eastern Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/20/2018
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Philip Khoury Academic Administrator: NA SHR Members: Aram Harrow and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/middle-eastern">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/middle-eastern</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: The Middle Eastern Studies concentration is designed for students interested principally in the art and architecture, culture, economics, history, and politics of the Arab world, Iran, Israel, and Turkey.

### Structure/Curriculum

Concentration requirements: Four subjects from a prescribed list, with no more than two subjects from a single area: Humanities and the Arts; Social Sciences and Historical Studies; and Language.

With the permission of the Concentration Advisor, students may take one or two introductory, intermediate, or advanced subjects in one of the following languages offered by Harvard University or Wellesley College: Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish. The advisor may also approve other Middle Eastern languages, such as Armenian, Greek, or Kurdish.

### Goals and Standards of Success

The Concentration should introduce students to an important part of the world and provide them an honest look at the culture, the society, and the politics of the Middle East.

### Advising

The Concentration Advisor advises mostly through the Online HASS Concentration Form but does like to meet with concentrators to learn more about what they are interested in and provide them advice on subjects to complete for the concentration.

### Publicity and Outreach

Website, which is updated by the SHASS Dean's Office's academic administrator.

### Community Building

Discussed the idea of inviting concentrators to a talk series.

### Challenges

- Would like to have more concentrators.
- Would like more administrative support to facilitate publicity and outreach.
- There are not a robust set of undergraduate subjects being offered in this field of study.
- The current Concentration Advisor does not teach any of the existing subjects.
- The concentration does not have an obvious introductory subject to attract concentrators (there was discussion about creating such a subject).
- The Online HASS Concentration Form creates a barrier to face-to-face meetings.
- The language subjects are not taught at MIT, students have to go to Harvard or Wellesley.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Middle Eastern Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	0
2014	0
2015	1
2016	0
2017	3
2018	2

<b>Music</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/13/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Leslie Tilley Academic Administrator: Nicole Paschal SHR Members: Tamar Schapiro and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Edward Schiappa and Rebecca Shepardson (CMS/W)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://mta.mit.edu/music/degree-requirements/music-concentration">http://mta.mit.edu/music/degree-requirements/music-concentration</a>

### Concentration Description

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

### Structure/Curriculum

Requires four subjects total. Students with little or no prior musical experience may start with one or more of our introductory subjects:

- Introduction to Western Music (CI-H) - 21M.011
- Introduction to World Music (CI-H) - 21M.030
- Fundamentals of Music - 21M.051

Students with some musical training are encouraged to begin at whatever level is appropriate to their experience. One of the four subjects may be a performance subject (21M.400-21M.499), which is by audition only, and must be taken for two semesters in order to count as one concentration subject.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Provide students with a broad perspective on music. Students should be happy with their choice of concentration and feel that they are cared for by the Concentration Advisor and instructors.

### Advising

All students who concentrate in Music must meet with the Concentration Advisor. Students can take subjects that interests them but are advised to consider a broad sampling of Music offerings. The meetings are a lot of extra work due to the high number of Music Concentrators. However, students seem to appreciate that Music cares, and the meetings give the Concentration Advisor an opportunity to tell students about minoring and majoring in the field. The face-to-face meetings also provide the Concentration Advisor the opportunity to learn what is important to students.

### Publicity and Outreach

- Concentration website.
- While students are in class, the instructor will let them know about other Music subjects that might be of interest to them.
- Email students in Music subjects to alert them to subject offerings.
- Put up posters.
- Advertise on the various screens around campus.

### **Community Building**

- Do not have events for concentrators.
- Composer series could be better publicized to students.

### **Challenges**

- Face-to-face meetings with every concentrator is time intensive for one Concentration Advisor. (Music now has two Concentration Advisors.)
- Students may be intimidated by broad spectrum of music. Would like for them to try different areas, maybe have an event for that purpose.
- Difficult to get tenured faculty to teach the introductory subjects – curriculum committee helps. 2-1 teaching load makes this more difficult.

### **Good Practices**

- Use the Online HASS Concentration Form to schedule office hour meetings – emailing all students who propose a concentration to ask them to sign up to meet.
- Consider adding another Concentration Advisor and devise a strategy to divide up the concentrators.

### **Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Music**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	104
2014	97
2015	102
2016	119
2017	112
2018	117

<b>Philosophy / Ethics</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 02/26/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Jack Spencer Academic Administrator: Jennifer Purdy SHR Members: Agustin Rayo and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://web.mit.edu/philosophy/concentrate.html">http://web.mit.edu/philosophy/concentrate.html</a> (Philosophy); <a href="http://web.mit.edu/philosophy/ethicsconcentrate.html">http://web.mit.edu/philosophy/ethicsconcentrate.html</a> (Ethics)

### Concentration Description

**Philosophy:** N/A – Description is not present on the website.

**Ethics:** From the website: Ethics is the study of questions about how we should live and how things should be. For example:

- How much should we give to the poor?
- How should we distribute scarce bio-medical resources?
- Should we violate rights of individuals when we can bring about the greater good by doing so?
- How should a society be organized if it is to count as just?

The concentration will give you a variety of different theoretical tools to help ask and answer such questions.

### Structure/Curriculum

**Philosophy:** Requires three subjects. One may be an introductory subject numbered *24.00-24.09*. No more than one introductory subject may count, and all three may be non-introductory subjects. The selection of subjects must be “well-distributed”, as determined by the Concentration Advisor. Philosophy subjects taught in Concourse are allowed to count as an introductory subject. Subjects from outside of MIT are also considered.

**Ethics:** Requires three subjects from a prescribed list, which also includes subjects from outside of Course 24 – Anthropology, Political Science, and Science, Technology, and Society (STS). At least one of three subjects must cover ethical theory: *24.02, 24.02, 24.120, 24.230, 24.231*; and only one following subjects may count towards the concentration: *STS.032, STS.049, STS.085J*.

### Goals and Standards of Success

To provide concentrators with an introduction to philosophy and provide them tools to confront philosophical questions in life.

### Advising

- Online HASS Concentration Forms have allowed students to update their concentrations with subjects as their proposals change. This creates a more accurate record of what students are taking for the concentration and shows the grades that students receive for their concentration subjects. Online HASS Concentration Forms do not get lost, which was a problem with the paper forms. Additionally, communicating with students is much easier using the online form.
- The Concentration Advisor does not meet all concentrators, mostly advises through the Online HASS Concentration Form.
- Some students have difficulty determining philosophy subject topics based on only the subject name.

**Publicity and Outreach**

- Concentration website.
- Academic fairs – Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation.
- Distribute fliers to students.
- Email students who do well in Philosophy subjects and encourage them to take more.

**Community Building**

The Concentration Advisor suggested that the concentrators could be invited to Philosophy Club events. This club puts on events such as lunches and movies where a faculty member may discuss their research and take questions. The Philosophy Club is funded through Course 24 and run by a student board. The club is working on putting together a website.

**Challenges**

- The Philosophy Club has continuity issues. Students have varying degrees of availability depending on their course load for the semester and coordinating in the fall can take some time. Suggestion to help with this is to appoint a faculty member and maybe a graduate student to help provide some guidance and continuity.
- Would like to reconsider its policy on using Concourse subjects towards the concentration.
- The Concentration Advisor does not have much of a background in Ethics and generally asks colleagues for their input when student questions arise.
- The Ethics Concentration subject list is not always consistently up to date. Also discussed contacting other HASS units to learn if subjects that might fit the Ethics Concentration are being offered.

**Good Practices**

Email students who do well in Philosophy subjects and encourage them to take more.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Philosophy and Ethics**

Class of	Philosophy	Ethics
2013	37	2
2014	37	4
2015	44	4
2016	55	2
2017	62	3
2018	47	4

<b>Political Science</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/26/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Devin Caughey Academic Administrator: Tobie Weiner SHR Members: Tamar Schapiro and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Jeffrey Harris and Gary King (Economics)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://polisci.mit.edu/undergraduate/concentration">https://polisci.mit.edu/undergraduate/concentration</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: A concentration in Political Science offers MIT students the opportunity to build greater understanding of an area of the world (for example, East Asia), a subfield of political science (such as U.S. politics), or a special issue or problem (such as the relationship between a nation's economy and its foreign policy).

The three-class concentration forms a focused, cohesive grouping that deepens student understanding of issues and methodologies, by showing how leading political scientists and researchers select, develop, and apply rigorous analyses to meet specific challenges.

To ensure appropriate depth, a concentration cannot be comprised of three introductory-level classes. One class in a concentration may be taken outside of the Political Science department.

### Structure/Curriculum

Students complete three subjects; one or two introductory subjects and one more advanced subject. Political Science does not require a strong background in foundational methodologies and concepts. Students are guided into an area of study, but the concentration is flexible and based on student interest. Suggested tracks of study include policy, political history, and/or political philosophy. Students can count cross-registered and subjects offered outside of Course 17 towards their concentration if a cogent argument is made. In the past, the concentration was less flexible, but some students had difficulty fitting subjects into their schedule or became interested in a different area of political science.

Political Science is now considering whether it should design more subjects that complement the Course 6 curriculum, such as *17.835 Machine Learning and Data Science and Politics*. The department is also deciding how much it should coordinate across programs for the concentration.

### Goals and Standards of Success

The Political Science Concentration should advance student goals and help prepare MIT undergraduates as the leaders of the future. Students should, if possible, take subjects that relate to their major and allow them to better understand the landscape of their industry and the world. For example, students who take advantage of various MISTI programs may concentrate in Political Science.

### Advising

The Concentration Advisor and the Academic Administrator provide advising to students. The website provides students with enough information for them to chart their own path through the Concentration without much, if any, help from advisors. The Concentration Advisor suggested that he was not familiar with the entirety of Political Science subject offerings and that could make it difficult for him to provide informed advice in some areas of study. The Academic Administrator acts as an advising resource and answers questions on subject offerings.

**Publicity and Outreach**

Concentration Website.

**Community Building**

Mostly minors and majors are invited to events, but they have begun inviting concentrators and students enrolled in Course 17 subjects. MIT used to invite political figures to come and speak at major events such as commencement, which benefited the department.

**Challenges**

There seems to be fewer concentrators deciding to minor in political science with the advent of the Online HASS Concentration Form and the reduced amount of face-to-face advising. Students being admitted appear to be less interested in political science and more interested in Course 6. The HASS unit would like to see more concentrators and higher subject enrollments overall.

**Good Practices**

- Help students think about how their concentration can enhance their major.
- Create subjects that compliment popular areas of study.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Political Science**

Class of	Completions
2013	47
2014	45
2015	50
2016	32
2017	52
2018	54

<b>Religious Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 11/08/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Graham Jones Academic Administrator: Irene Hartford SHR Members: John Carroll and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Christine Walley (Anthropology)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/religious-studies">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/religious-studies</a>

**Concentration Description**

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

**Structure/Curriculum**

Three subjects constituting a coherent course of study selected in consultation with the Concentration Advisor. A list of suggested subjects is included on the website. Other courses may be included at the Concentration Advisor's discretion. Students seeking a wider range of topics related to global religions may also cross-register for classes at Harvard or Wellesley.

**Goals and Standards of Success**

Students should complete three subjects that study religion.

**Advising**

- The Concentration Advisor speaks to students who express interest in the concentration.
- The Concentration Advisors advises students to take subjects in any HASS unit that are on the topic of religion, and, because there are not a lot of religion subjects offered at MIT, he also advises some students to cross-register at Harvard or Wellesley if necessary.

**Publicity and Outreach**

The Concentration Advisor does not perform outreach, though students do often ask about the Religious Studies Concentration.

**Community Building**

Does not do any community building beyond what is done for students concentrating in Anthropology.

**Challenges**

- Subjects that focus on an aspect of religion are not consistently offered and cataloging the ones that are offered can be a difficult endeavor.
- There is not a faculty member or lecturer dedicated to teaching a subject(s) on religion each year in Anthropology.
- No faculty in any HASS unit is dedicated to teaching a subject(s) related to religious studies. SHASS should invest in a faculty member who specializes in the politics of religion.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Religious Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	1
2014	0
2015	4
2016	1
2017	0
2018	0

<b>Russian and Eurasian Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 04/09/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Elizabeth Wood Academic Administrator: SHR Members: Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Hiromu Nagahara (Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/russian">https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/interdisciplinary/conc/russian</a>

### Concentration Description

The Russian and Eurasian Studies Regional Studies Concentration is intended for students seeking an interdisciplinary program of study centered on Russia and Eurasia. The program is regional in spirit, meaning that students can take courses in a wide range of countries of East/Central Europe, the Slavic states, and Central Asia.

### Structure/Curriculum

Four subjects, chosen from the following MIT subjects:

- 17.569 *Russia's Foreign Policy: Toward the Post-Soviet States and Beyond*
- 21G.077/21G.618 *Introduction to the Classics of Russian Literature*
- 21G.611 *Russian I (Regular)*
- 21G.612 *Russian II (Regular)*
- 21G.613 *Russian III (Regular)*
- 21G.614 *Russian IV (Regular)*
- 21H.244/21G.085 *Imperial and Revolutionary Russia: Culture and Politics, 1700-1917*
- 21H.245/17.57/21G.086 *Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society, 1917-Present*

Students may also cross-register for classes at Harvard or Wellesley in languages of Eastern Europe and/or Russian, as well as courses in history, literature, government and other subjects.

[In the process of developing an introductory subject for the concentration.]

### Goals and Standards of Success

Students should complete four subjects in Russian and Eurasian Studies.

### Advising

- Very straightforward concentration to advise.
- The Concentration Advisor gets to know each of the concentrators.

### Publicity and Outreach

- Use the Russian and Eurasian Studies email list from the Online HASS Concentration Form.
- Participate in academic fairs (Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation) and Tour de SHASS.

### Community Building

The concentration is small, and the number of subjects is limited, so the concentrators get to know each other.

### **Challenges**

- There are not resources for group activities and outings. Would like to create an FPOP for regional studies in general.
- The interest is there, but MIT does not offer a lot of subjects in this area, and cross-registration can be a barrier to the concentration.
- Difficult for students to continue into a minor in Russian Studies.

### **Good Practices**

Synergize with MISTI programs.

### **Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Russian and Eurasian Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	1
2014	1
2015	2
2016	4
2017	5
2018	6

<b>Science, Technology, and Society (STS)</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 05/07/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Rosalind Williams Academic Administrator: Karen Gardner SHR Members: Agustin Rayo and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Tanalis Padilla (Latin American and Latino/a Studies) and Andrea Wirth
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/concentration/">http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/concentration/</a>

**Concentration Description**

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

**Structure/Curriculum**

A concentration in STS consists of three STS Subjects, at least one — and not more than two — of which must be selected from the Tier I list.

\*Note: This concentration has been revised for AY2019. Students will be able to take any three STS subjects – no tiers.

**Goals and Standards of Success**

Goal is to augment each student's undergraduate major and have them upgrade their concentration to a minor.

**Advising**

- Most advising occurs through the Online HASS Concentration Form and this method is sufficient.
- Suggest that students consider a minor in STS.
- Many students can plan their concentration without consultation of the Concentration Advisor.

**Publicity and Outreach**

- Students are attracted to STS subject topics (Bioethics or the History of Bioengineering) and decide to concentrate.
- Students find the concentration through word of mouth.
- Information on the concentration is on the STS Website.
- Many STS subjects carry CI-H credit, which attract first-year students.

**Community Building**

Currently, there is not a community of concentrators, but this has been identified as something that STS minors would want. Concentrators would be included in this community.

**Challenges**

- STS could use a central campus space.
- Difficulty in constructing HASS UOPS for students.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Science, Technology, and Society (STS)**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	54
2014	32
2015	23
2016	32
2017	34
2018	45

<b>Theater Arts</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/11/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Anna Kohler Academic Administrator: Nicole Paschal SHR Members: Emily Richmond-Pollock and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://mta.mit.edu/theater-arts/degree-requirements/theater-arts-concentration">http://mta.mit.edu/theater-arts/degree-requirements/theater-arts-concentration</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: A concentration in Theater Arts is comprised of three to four 9-to-12-unit courses for a minimum of 36 credits in the Theater Arts curriculum and is designed as a broad introduction to the discipline. Up to nine units of theater practicum: acting, directing, or design in Theater Arts productions may be counted towards the concentration.

### Structure/Curriculum

Students generally enter the Concentration by taking *21M.600 Introduction to Acting*. This subject, like all Theater Arts subjects, includes background information on the topic covered. Students in the concentration generally fall into one of two tracks – students may focus on acting, writing, and directing or choose to focus on design and stagecraft. Some students may mix the two tracks. Many students take more than the required 36 credits for the concentration. Theater Arts offers subjects on world theater and physical theater. Students can count one subject from outside of Theater Arts towards the concentration.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Many students who see advantages to learning how to be relaxed when giving presentations and speaking in public, take a Theater Arts subject, and then find that they enjoy the discipline. Students in the concentration should learn how to be comfortable while presenting/speaking and also gain insight in theater research and practice. Overall, the concentration should act as an introduction to the field and should help persuade students to minor or major in Theater Arts.

### Advising

The Concentration Advisor believes that meeting face-to-face with each concentrator is important and requires students to meet. At the meeting students:

- Learn what is expected of them.
- Are assured that they will be supported.
- Select subjects based on expressed interests.
- Learn about the content of subjects that may be unclear.
- Are provided advice on subjects they might like.
- Are recommended to take 6-12 –unit practicum subjects.
- Are advised to consider minoring or majoring in Theater Arts.

### Publicity and Outreach

- The Concentration Advisor will go to the classrooms of other Theater Arts subjects and suggest other offerings within the unit that students might enjoy.
- Website provides basic information on the concentration.

**Community Building**

Theater Arts will host open houses and a party for departing seniors, minors and majors. The unit also has a shared space for students. Anytime students are working in groups or on a production they are also building community. Additionally, students participate in three public events each semester, which require that they read in front of others. Overall, the nature of the concentration creates bonds among students. Students are also invited to various events via email.

**Challenges**

- The location of the new Theater Arts space can be problematic, as students have to travel fairly far from the main campus (far down Vassar Street, west side of campus).
- The Theater Arts space needs a person to administer it – lab manager type of position. Currently, instructors manage the space, but there is not one person responsible for its upkeep.
- Theater Arts uses a lot of adjunct instructors to teach recitations and that can make the curriculum a little uneven.
- Due to high student interest, Theater Arts could use more TAs and administrators to help with logistics.
- Would like to have more advanced acting subjects.

**Good Practices**

- Group projects help build a sense of community for students.
- Projects that draw from a myriad of different skills (stage craft, acting, etc.) can take students outside of the classroom to achieve a common goal.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Theater Arts**

Class of	Completions
2013	32
2014	40
2015	49
2016	49
2017	65
2018	52

<b>Urban Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 11/15/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Ezra Glenn Academic Administrator: Ellen Rushman SHR Members: David Jerison and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://dusp.mit.edu/sites/dusp.mit.edu/files/attached_files/ug_hass.pdf">http://dusp.mit.edu/sites/dusp.mit.edu/files/attached_files/ug_hass.pdf</a>

### **Concentration Description**

From the website: The Department of Urban Studies and Planning offers many possibilities for creating a concentration tailored to your needs and interests. Areas include: Designing the Urban Environment; Environmental Policy; Urban History; Policy Analysis and Urban Problems; International Development; and Education.

You can also always create a concentration that fits your particular interests within Institute guidelines. We will assist you in selecting three subjects that suit your concerns and background. Since some subjects are offered only every other year, we encourage you to discuss the possibilities with us by the end of your sophomore year. Subject offerings change on an annual basis and students should check with the Department for the latest information.

### **Structure/Curriculum**

Urban Studies and Development (DUSP) has a broad and interdisciplinary curriculum. Students take three subjects in an area that interests them. Students may also choose to take subjects in different topic areas to create a broader concentration. Subjects outside of Course 11 can count towards a concentration. For example, students who focus on education can also count subjects taken through cross-registration.

### **Goals and Standards of Success**

The concentration has been in place for a long time and the Concentration Advisor's primary goal is to continue to sustain it for students who are interested in the various fields of study in DUSP. Ideally, the concentration would bring more minors and majors to Urban Studies.

### **Advising**

- The strategy is to engage students who have taken a single DUSP subject, suggest that they focus on a topic for a concentration, encourage them to minor, and then major.
- Students are encouraged to take subjects in any area, as subjects in DUSP do not usually require prerequisites.
- In some cases, the Concentration Advisor will recommend to students who are interested in in-depth policy study to cross-register.
- The Concentration Advisor will meet face-to-face with about half of the concentrators.
- If the student expresses interest in a field that the Concentration Advisor is less familiar with, he will recommend the student approach a faculty member with more expertise.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

The website appears to be working well, but unsure how effective it is overall.

### **Community Building**

Created a list-serve for students to sign up to learn about public events and to hear speakers.

**Challenges**

- Undergraduates may find the high number of graduate students at various events to be a little intimidating.
- Subject offerings are inconsistent. This means that students may find that their planned path through the concentration needs to be revised at the last minute because a subject will not be offered. Staffing undergraduate subjects each semester can be a challenge.
- Not invited to the Tour de SHASS, where many HASS Concentrations get publicity.
- Would like to have students focus on their concentration earlier in their academic career – sophomore year.
- Connecting with students can be a challenge.
- The majority of students within DUSP are graduate students.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Urban Studies**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	18
2014	23
2015	39
2016	34
2017	25
2018	43

<b>Women and Gender Studies</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/11/18
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Elizabeth Wood Academic Administrator: Emily Neill (WGS Program Manager) SHR Members: Emily Richmond-Pollock and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://wgs.mit.edu/degree-requirements">http://wgs.mit.edu/degree-requirements</a>

### Concentration Description

From the website: The Program in Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) offers three levels of academic engagement: Concentration, Minor, and Major. Each is designed for students seeking an academic framework for the study of women, gender, and sexuality using the analytical tools and methodologies of a variety of disciplines in the humanities, arts, and social sciences.

The Concentration and Minor are aimed at students who wish to balance the focus of their major program of study with a fuller understanding of the ways in which gender and other constructs have shaped our understanding of ourselves and of the communities and world in which we live.

### Structure/Curriculum

The concentration in Women's and Gender Studies consists of at least three WGS subjects, many of which are cross-listed with other departments. *WGS.101 Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies* is required and is offered each semester. WGS does have curriculum and steering committees, which meet regularly to review curriculum and make decisions.

### Goals and Standards of Success

Share with students the rich variety of interdisciplinary work being done around gender, identity, and race. Teach students methodologies and ways of thinking that they can apply to situations outside of the classroom as well as in other classes.

### Advising

All students must take *WGS.101 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies* (offered each semester) at some point. Other than that, students take WGS subjects that they find interesting. Most advising, if needed, is through the Online HASS Concentration Form. The advisor often leaves a note in the online form for concentrators to consider a minor in WGS.

### Publicity and Outreach

The Program Manager publicizes WGS (concentration, minor, and major) through a variety of mediums. For example, she creates a variety of buttons with slogans and graphics that pertain to WGS for students and staff. Other publicity activities include:

- A photo booth in Lobby 10.
- Numerous events (films, lunches, lectures) throughout the year to attract students.
- Students who enroll in a WGS subject are added to a mailing list and are notified of events.
- WGS hires about 10 students a year to work on various projects, which helps with publicity and building community.
- Participates in the Tour de SHASS and other academic fairs – Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) and Orientation.

**Community Building**

- Established WGS initiatives, such as *My Sister’s Keeper* and *Hermanas Unidas*, create a great sense of community.
- WGS assists interested students in creating student organizations. They also can provide resources for student organized events.
- WGS hosts a film series and other events for students – e.g., lunch time tacos and feminist thought, and yearly barbeques.
- WGS office is always open to students and is stocked with tea, snacks, and videos.
- WGS invite faculty to present research to during lunch.

**Challenges**

- Recruiting faculty to teach WGS subjects can be challenging because faculty typically don’t have the flexibility to teach outside of their home departments with a restricted 2-1 teaching load.
- Finding space for events is challenging.

**Good Practices**

- Connect students to mentors through initiatives like *My Sister’s Keeper* and *Hermanas Unidas*.
- Collaborate with other groups for events.
- Strategic about events, subjects, and scheduling. Community and curriculum are closely related.
- Students make fantastic ambassadors for the program and often invite friends to events.
- Faculty and staff support of student run groups can provide long term sustainability and institutional memory.
- Hire students to work on WGS specific projects, which integrates them into the WGS community and turns them into ambassadors (students email friends about events).

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Women’s and Gender Studies**

Class of	Completions
2013	23
2014	15
2015	15
2016	23
2017	22
2018	21

<b>Writing</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b> 12/13/17
<b>Attendees:</b> Concentration Advisor: Edward Schiappa Academic Administrator: Rebecca Shepardson SHR Members: Tamar Schapiro and Marah Gubar SHR Staff: Jason Donath and Patty Fernandes Other Attendees: Leslie Tilley and Nicole Paschal (Music)
<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://cmsw.mit.edu/education/writing/undergraduate/">https://cmsw.mit.edu/education/writing/undergraduate/</a>

### **Concentration Description**

N/A – Description is not present on the website.

### **Structure/Curriculum**

The Concentration in Writing consists of four subjects chosen in consultation with the Concentration Advisor. Ordinarily, of these four, no more than one will be at the introductory level (21W.0xx). In addition, of the four, three will form a coherent group within one of the major categories of the curriculum (Creative Writing, Science Writing, or Digital Media).

CMS/W has stated that a three-subject concentration would work too if that was recommended, but they are also happy with four subjects.

### **Goals and Standards of Success**

A successful concentration is one in which students are more satisfied (or at least as satisfied) with their class choices and opportunity to explore Humanities at MIT than they would have been if their choice of classes within SHASS had been left entirely open. The goal is to provide accessible and clear information on the Writing Concentration, and prompt and thorough answers to student questions.

Ideally some students might be inspired to extend their concentration into a minor or even major, but the success of the concentration is not based on numbers.

### **Advising**

In-person meetings are not required nor needed. Not too many students choose to meet with the Concentration Advisor. One drawback from moving away from face-to-face advising is learning how students perceive certain subjects.

### **Publicity and Outreach**

Website and use handouts for events.

### **Community Building**

Concentrators are welcome to attend Writing events, such as Poetry Readings. They used to maintain a concentrator mailing list for event announcements, but this has fallen away with the Online HASS Concentration Form. They wondered if they could use the email function in the new system to send out event announcements; weren't sure if that was an appropriate use of the system. Writing has an informal writing group headed by the director of WRAP.

**Challenges**

- Would like to use the online form to contact and invite students to events. (They now know that they can use this.)
- Make the pages on the online form load faster – system is a bit slow.
- Lack of resources or central repository of information to help students create or maintain “clubs” or extra-curricular activities.

**Good Practices**

- Think about writers and poets, not necessarily concentrators as a group. Very diverse population.
- Struggle to motivate faculty to teach introductory subjects – wrote a charge for the curriculum committee to help address this issue.

**Number of Students with Completed Concentrations in Writing**

<b>Class of</b>	<b>Completions</b>
2013	32
2014	29
2015	36
2016	45
2017	30
2018	29

**HASS Concentration student survey, Fall 2018**

Population – Year 3 and Year 4 students

2313 students total were invited, 509 responded (22%)

**Branch Question**

**Have you submitted a proposal for your HASS Concentration?**

Yes – 75% (383)

No – 25% (126)

Proposed a Concentration, N=383	No proposed HASS Concentration, N=126
<p><b>1a. Which HASS Concentration did you propose? (dropdown of concentration choices)</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 337)</i></p> <p><b>Top selected concentrations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Economics – <b>13%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Music – <b>11%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Literature – <b>7%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Political Science – <b>6%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Linguistics – <b>6%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Spanish – <b>6%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Urban Studies – <b>6%</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>1b. Which HASS Concentration are you most strongly considering? (dropdown of concentration choices)</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 94)</i></p> <p><b>Top selected concentrations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Economics – <b>24%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Music – <b>11%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Comparative Media Studies – <b>7%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Literature – <b>6%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Political Science – <b>6%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> History – <b>5%</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>2a. What resources did you use to select your concentration? (select all that apply)</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 284)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Peers – <b>44%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Major Advisor – <b>7%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Subject instructor – <b>19%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Concentration Advisor – <b>19%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Academic Administrator – <b>3%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Website with concentration information – <b>67%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>53 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “My own interests.”</li> <li>– “Classes that I enjoyed.”</li> <li>– “Prior interest in the subject.”</li> <li>– “Parents.”</li> <li>– “Class instructor.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>2b. What resources do you plan to use to select your concentration? (select all that apply)</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 79)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Peers – <b>53%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Major Advisor – <b>24 %</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Subject instructor – <b>24%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Concentration Advisor – <b>18%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Academic Administrator – <b>9%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Website with concentration information – <b>65%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>11 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “My own interests, the classes I’ve taken that will contribute to it.”</li> <li>– “Generally, see which ones have the least requirements.”</li> <li>– “Parents.”</li> <li>– “Minoring in History, and it will also be my concentration.”</li> <li>– “What classes fit in my schedule.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**3a. Do you feel like you had all of the information needed to decide on a concentration?**

*N=383 (Answered: 337)*

- Yes – **88%**
- No – **12%**
- If no, what information was missing? (open text box) – *32 comments*
  - “Exploration of additional HASS subjects.”
  - “The benefit of picking one over the others.”
  - “Maybe some sort of online guide book for experiences and opportunities for each concentration.”
  - “My major advisor was clueless about the process and I felt very in the dark about the requirements.”
  - “No clear outline on what classes I needed to take to satisfy all of my requirements.”
  - “Descriptions of the concentrations and what opportunities that can open up.”

**3b. Do you feel like you will have all of the information needed to decide on a concentration?**

*N=126 (Answered: 97)*

- Yes – **89%**
- No – **11%**
- If no, what information was missing? (open text box) – *9 comments*
  - “A central place where I can compare them.”
  - “I wish I had made a plan and deliberately picked a concentration freshman year, instead of just picking individual classes.”
  - “Whether or not my transfer credits will count towards completion of my concentration.”
  - “Who I can talk to, to help guide me in the decision process or help see if classes satisfy a concentration.”
  - “Basically everything.”
  - “Not sure if I can use it if I do a second major in economics.”
  - “Desire to look up another thing.”

**4a. How much did the following influence your choice of concentration? 1-4 Likert scale (1: no influence; 2: very little influence; 3: moderate influence; 4: great influence; N/A)**

*N=383 (Answered: 337)*

	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Great Influence	N/A
Peer recommendations.	39%	20%	23%	12%	7%
Faculty or advisor recommendation.	53%	15%	13%	4%	16%
I had an existing interest in the concentration.	4%	3%	19%	74%	1%
The information on the concentration’s website.	23%	19%	38%	16%	4%
The subjects were the easiest to fit into my schedule.	30%	24%	25%	17%	4%
I already had completed one or more subjects in the concentration.	13%	9%	27%	44%	7%
I believed the concentration would help me achieve my future professional goals.	29%	21%	24%	21%	4%

**4b. How much do you expect the following will influence your choice of concentration? 1-4 Likert scale (1: no influence; 2: very little influence; 3: moderate influence; 4: great influence; N/A)**

*N=126 (Answered: 95)*

	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Great Influence	N/A
Peer recommendations.	23%	21%	36%	17%	3%
Faculty or advisor recommendation.	31%	27%	24%	11%	7%
I have an existing interest in the concentration.	5%	4%	8%	81%	1%
The information on the concentration’s website.	22%	17%	36%	22%	3%
The subjects would be the easiest to fit into my schedule.	20%	19%	34%	25%	2%
I already had completed one or more subjects in the concentration.	7%	3%	36%	51%	2%
I believe the concentration would help me achieve my future professional goals.	20%	29%	21%	27%	2%

<p><b>5a. Did your major play a role in your choice of concentration?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 340)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>14%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>86%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, how? (open text box) – <i>38 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “I want to combine my studies on the environment with anthropology, to analyze how environmental issues affect and build off of cultures.”</li> <li>– “I thought CMS connected to Course 6 very well, especially with respect to video games.”</li> <li>– “My major is 2A product design. I wanted a more artistic approach to design than was offered in 2.”</li> <li>– “Civil Engineering is tightly tied with policy and urban planning. I felt it would be useful to understand the context in which I would be working on buildings.”</li> <li>– “My major, mathematics, influenced my interest in philosophy as a method of trying to reason abstractly about problems of a non-mathematical nature.”</li> <li>– “Not particularly. I took a class joint with STS and my major (8.225) that made me realize I really enjoyed STS, but otherwise, no.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>5b. Will your major play a role in your choice of concentration?</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 97)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>25%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>75%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, how? (open text box) – <i>19 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “I think that I will prefer a concentration that builds up skills not covered in the major. For example, my advisor recommends not taking economics because it is mathematical like my major.”</li> <li>– “I am a philosophy major, so I feel a bit like I should complete some other concentration.”</li> <li>– “Economics complements Course 11, and my career interests.”</li> <li>– “I’m an Urban Studies and Computer Science Major (11-6) that wants to concentrate in something that is useful and applicable to my major.”</li> <li>– “I want my concentration to complement my major. I am 6-3, so I am doing philosophy to complement my technical knowledge with more abstract and subjective thinking.”</li> <li>– “I am majoring in my concentration.”</li> <li>– “Similar fields.”</li> <li>– “Not sure but it should.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>6a. Was there a different concentration that you would have preferred to concentrate in?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 334)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>19%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>81%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, what was the reason you did not concentrate in that HASS field?       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> I could not fit the subjects into my schedule. – <b>89%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> I chose the concentration that seemed more practical for my future professional goals. – <b>11%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>33 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Not available anymore – psychology.”</li> <li>– “Psychology was not offered any more. Please bring it back.”</li> <li>– “I didn’t find out I liked history until too late.”</li> <li>– “I realized I could do Spanish super-fast and easily. In hindsight, that was an awful reason. I enjoy taking music classes more.”</li> <li>– “It ended up being too time consuming in one of the semesters.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>6b. Is there a concentration that you would prefer to concentrate in but will not?</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 95)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>16%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>84%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, what is the reason you will not concentrate in that HASS field?       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> I cannot fit the subjects into my schedule. – <b>73%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> I will choose the concentration that seems more practical for my future professional goals. – <b>27%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>9 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “It was too time consuming and took away time from focusing on my major.”</li> <li>– “Not enough time.”</li> <li>– “Since I have not taken any Spanish at MIT yet, all future HASS courses would have to be Spanish courses, and I wish to be able to explore and have more flexibility than that.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**7a. How satisfied are you with the following experiences within your concentration? 1-5 Likert scale (1: very dissatisfied; 2: dissatisfied; 3: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 4: satisfied; 5: very satisfied; N/A)**

*N=383 (Answered: 313)*

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A
Subjects	0%	3%	6%	43%	48%	0%
Instructors	0%	1%	6%	36%	57%	0%
The community	1%	7%	26%	28%	28%	10%
Concentration Advisor	1%	3%	29%	21%	24%	22%
Connection to professional goals	2%	4%	32%	29%	13%	19%

**7b. If you have already made progress towards your concentration, how satisfied are you with the following experiences with your concentration? 1-5 Likert scale (1: very dissatisfied; 2: dissatisfied; 3: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 4: satisfied; 5: very satisfied; N/A)**

*N=126 (Answered: 86)*

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A
Subjects	0%	1%	6%	40%	43%	10%
Instructors	0%	0%	6%	38%	45%	10%
The community	1%	3%	26%	30%	16%	23%
Concentration Advisor	0%	0%	15%	9%	6%	67%
Connection to professional goals	4%	6%	25%	22%	9%	34%

**8. Have you been able to complete all the subjects you want to take for your concentration?**

*N=383 (Answered: 311)*

- Yes – **71%**
- No – **29%**
- If no, why not? (open text box) – *78 comments*
  - “Still in progress.”
  - “Timing /Schedule.”
  - “I decided on my concentration kind of late.”
  - “Not always offered.”
  - “Many subjects conflict, have to make hard choices. Only so many semesters. Great demand by the institute/major to take technical classes instead.”
  - “Scheduling diverted me from my ideal path, but I am not displeased with the route I finished with.”
  - “It’s hard to get into the classes I needed to.”
  - “Scheduling can be difficult. Sometimes I also didn’t pre-register and couldn’t get into the class. Many CMS classes are oversubscribed.”
  - “No, didn’t fit into my schedule. Also was discouraged from taking harder subjects because I wasn’t good enough.”
  - “Poetry is hell to lottery into.”



<p><b>9. Were there any subjects that you wished were available for your concentration but were not offered?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 305)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>29%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>71%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, please describe (open text box) – <i>84 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “More film studies courses.”</li> <li>– “More dance classes. I think it’s very sad that we only offer two.”</li> <li>– “Drawing classes.”</li> <li>– “More on global health.”</li> <li>– “Psychology.”</li> <li>– “My concentration is education, and I have loved the classes and wish there were more offered as I have taken them all.”</li> <li>– “Arabic at MIT (Harvard was good, but not terribly convenient).”</li> <li>– “Most subjects in philosophy are only offered once every few years.”</li> <li>– “More media production courses, especially narrative filmmaking! (Along the lines of Harvard’s VES 60), animation classes.”</li> <li>– “A statistics class for HASS students.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>10. What did you learn from the HASS Concentration Advisor? (select all that apply)</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 302)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> More about my concentration and the field of study. – <b>20%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> About the subjects that make up the concentration. – <b>26%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> More about the HASS field beyond my concentration, including minor and/or major information. – <b>17%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Very little about my concentration. – <b>11%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> I did not receive any advising for my concentration. – <b>57%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>13 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “I didn’t know we had a concentration advisor.”</li> <li>– “I proposed the concentration I had in mind and I did not request any advising.”</li> <li>– “I didn’t receive any advising, but I also didn’t want any advising so that’s fine by me. I’m sure if I had asked for some, I would have received it.”</li> <li>– “I think I used to have a concentration advisor – I vaguely recall receiving a pleasant email from him. Not sure if I have one now.”</li> <li>– “Information regarding my progress.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<p><b>11a. What would you like to learn from the HASS Concentration Advisor? (select all that apply)</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 279)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> More about my concentration's field of study. – <b>20%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> More about subject options. – <b>29%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> More about the HASS field beyond my concentration, including minor and/or major information. – <b>24%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> I do not think that advising for my concentration is necessary. – <b>58%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>4 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Maybe more career and research support.”</li> <li>– “Learning more about the rigor of classes would be nice. I’m hesitant to go into more advanced classes because I’m afraid I don’t have the time/motivation to push through writing blocks.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>11b. What would you like to learn from the HASS Concentration Advisor? (select all that apply)</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 84)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> More about my concentration's field of study. – <b>32%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> More about subject options. – <b>45%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> More about the HASS field beyond my concentration, including minor and/or major information. – <b>29%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> I do not think that advising for my concentration is necessary. – <b>54%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>7 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “How to participate in an extra-curricular manner (e.g. research opportunities, community functions, etc.)”</li> <li>– “When I get an advisor I’d like to have conversations about how I can integrate my concentration with my other professional interests.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>12a. What kind of interaction with a HASS Concentration Advisor do you prefer?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 302)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Face-to-face meeting – <b>38%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Email – <b>38%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Interaction through the online HASS Concentration Form – <b>24%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>5 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Anything is better than nothing.”</li> <li>– “Email is good, but I’d like the ability to be able to meet face to face if that became something I actively wanted.”</li> <li>– “I think all of these are valuable options to have – some people want more face-to-face communication, and other people are just filling a requirement.”</li> <li>– “Option of form or face to face meeting – when there’s actual content, face to face is great, otherwise, it’s nice to just get things checked off.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>12b. What kind of interaction with a HASS Concentration Advisor would you prefer?</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 85)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Face-to-face meeting – <b>60%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Email – <b>31%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Interaction through the online HASS Concentration Form – <b>9%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other (open text box) – <i>3 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “None?”</li> <li>– “Still don’t know you got one of these, never heard anything about them.”</li> <li>– “Email is also fine.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>13. How many interactions (including using the form) have you had with the Concentration Advisor?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 301)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> 1-2 – <b>82%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> 3-4 – <b>7%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> More than 4 – <b>11%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If more than 4, describe those interactions. (open text box) – <i>33 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Advisor is also my professor.” – main response</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<p><b>14a. Have you participated in any events sponsored by the HASS field you are concentrating in – e.g., lecture series, general gathering, luncheon or dinner event?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 311)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>33%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>67%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, what did you participate in? – <i>65 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Lit Tea.”</li> <li>– “IAP Italy trip.”</li> <li>– “Lunches, movie viewings.”</li> <li>– “Guest lecture series.”</li> <li>– “Award ceremony.”</li> <li>– “Philosophy club.”</li> <li>– “Luncheon.”</li> <li>– “I watched plays put on by the theater department.”</li> <li>– “The department has a big dinner event every year and a few small celebrations to mark cultural holidays/festivals.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>14b. Have you participated in any events sponsored by the HASS field you are considering for a concentration – e.g., lecture series, general gathering, luncheon or dinner event?</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 87)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>26%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>74%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, what did you participate in? – <i>14 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Several music events over the past few years.”</li> <li>– “Contest, then dinner.”</li> <li>– “Various Course 4 lecture series also I’m part of the philosophy community and go to those sorts of gatherings, being a major.”</li> <li>– “General gatherings of students studying Japanese.”</li> <li>– “Chinese mid-Autumn festival.”</li> <li>– “Info session about working at a Think Tank in Course 17.”</li> <li>– “MISTI info sessions.”</li> <li>– “I think a lecture when I learned about STS.”</li> <li>– “Lecture series and a couple of symposiums.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>15a. Do you have a sense of community within the HASS field?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 306)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>38%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>62%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Comments (text box) – <i>31 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “WAY more than in Course 6 because the classes are actually reasonable sizes!”</li> <li>– “I wish we had an undergrad archaeology group/club/society.”</li> <li>– “I wish there was a community.”</li> <li>– “It would be nice if the language concentrations had like twice monthly social gatherings where you could come and just socialize in that language and have food.”</li> <li>– “I have taken a couple of classes with the same people and this helps to bring a sense of community. I think it would be cool to have specific events for concentrators though.”</li> <li>– “I am a member of MITSO, so I feel a sense of community there.”</li> <li>– “I’m not part of the literature community at MIT but it definitely exists and seems pretty nice.”</li> <li>– “It exists, I just don’t care for it because it’s too classical/traditional.”</li> <li>– “I don’t enjoy HASS.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>15b. Do you have a sense of community within the HASS field?</b></p> <p><i>N=126 (Answered: 88)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>28%</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> No – <b>71%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Comments (text box) – <i>11 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “The people in my Econ major.”</li> <li>– “Why is there no community for HASS majors? There is no way to connect or meet each other, and since there are so few in each department, it is extremely isolating.”</li> <li>– “I did Concourse my freshman year, which definitely helped in this regard.”</li> <li>– “I know classmates reasonably well but spend more time with people in my same major because that’s what I need more support for.”</li> <li>– “As I am minoring in music and participate in performance groups, there is more of a sense of community than there would be if I were merely taking a few subjects in the department.”</li> <li>– “I mean I think I’ve had a class with the same person in it once? But it wasn’t even in two classes in my concentration, idk this isn’t really what I’m at this university for.”</li> <li>– “I don’t entirely know what this means but I suspect I really don’t want a “sense of community”. I just want to learn about linguistics, thanks.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>16a. Is a community of students that share the same interests within the concentration important to you?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 309)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Not important at all – <b>12%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Low importance – <b>18%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Slightly important – <b>22%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Moderately important – <b>32%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Very important – <b>11%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Extremely important – <b>5%</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>16b. Is a community of students that share the same interests within the concentration important to you?</b></p> <p><i>N=383 (Answered: 88)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Not important at all – <b>15%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Low importance – <b>20%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Slightly important – <b>19%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Moderately important – <b>25%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Very important – <b>15%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> Extremely important – <b>6%</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>17. Is there a concentration that you wished existed that is not available as an option?</b></p> <p><i>N=509 (Answered: 390)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes – <b>25%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> No – <b>75%</b></li> <li><input type="radio"/> If yes, what is it? (open text box) – <i>99 comments</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Psychology”</li> <li>– “Fine Arts”</li> <li>– “Dance”</li> <li>– “Video Game Design”</li> <li>– “Classical Languages”</li> <li>– “Global Health”</li> <li>– “Film Studies”</li> <li>– “Design”</li> <li>– “Policy or Poverty Studies”</li> <li>– “Sociology”</li> <li>– “An explicit Education concentration not under Urban Studies would be nice.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>18. Please share any additional comments you have about HASS concentrations here. (open text box) – 56 comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Overall, I think for me personally, though I would have done it differently, the opportunity to immerse myself in a HASS subject would have been invaluable, and the community and atmosphere is a vitally different part of my MIT education.”</li> <li>– “The lack of flexibility in the History concentration was difficult for me.”</li> <li>– “My HASS concentration has now turned into my minor and I really value these classes.”</li> <li>– “The idea of the HASS concentration is very appealing and a unique component of the graduation requirement.”</li> <li>– “I wish I could receive HASS concentration advising earlier on in the process (as early as freshman year). I believe that would have immensely helped my 4-year planning.”</li> <li>– “I tried out many HASS subjects during my first two years, which unfortunately ended up narrowing my options for the concentration. I wish more concentrations were 3 subjects instead of 4 so that it was easier to explore.”</li> </ul>	

- “I just really need to take classes that fit my schedule, I’m not a huge fan of having to concentrate.”
- “Personally, having a HASS concentration as a requirement has allowed me to discover my love of learning about languages and cultures and now I am also minoring in my concentration subject.”
- “The concentration was a great transition to pursuing a minor.”
- “I really enjoy what I have been able to do in the Literature department, and like the variety of classes offered.”
- “I wish we did not have to declare a concentration so that we could just take classes that are most interesting to us and explore/broaden our understanding with many different HASS classes.”
- “Get rid of the concentration, seems like there would be a negligible difference if it didn’t exist, and students would have greater flexibility in exploring new subject areas.”
- “I don’t think the HASS concentration requirement is necessary. Nor do I think the HASS breadth requirement is necessary. I think there should be a general HASS requirement of a certain number of units, but with complete student freedom to choose which HASSs to take.”
- “The HASS Concentration is so, so important. Email me and I can talk more about it... By giving (/requiring) students a personal investment in the humanities, MIT cultivates students with more investment in other people, society, and the good of the world.”

**19. If you are interested in participating in a focus group about HASS concentrations, please enter your MIT email address:**

*Received 29 email addresses*