

# ROCK INTEGRATED STUDIES PROGRAM

The Rock Integrated Studies Program (the RISP, or, as it is referred to on campus, "Rock Studies") at Slippery Rock University is the general education requirement for all academic majors at the University. It includes 42 credits of the required 120 minimum credits required for graduation. It therefore requires as many credits as many majors, and is just as important as a major to our students' educations. Its purpose is to reinforce connections between learning within major programs and the broader learning gained in an undergraduate curriculum.

To introduce Rock Studies we have created a video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDyQ2eQITg8&feature=youtu.be>) that describes the parts of the program and related academic requirements.

The Rock Studies program replaces the former general education program, Liberal Studies (<https://www.sru.edu/Documents/programs/curriculumguides/liberalstudiesguide.pdf/>). If you are a student who needs to find out which program you should follow, or if you are an Adviser who needs to find out whether a student should follow Rock Studies or Liberal Studies, please see the drop-down menu below for clarification.

Some specific majors have been given permission to substitute courses within Rock Studies. Therefore, students should keep a current Rock Audit report (available via MySRU (<https://mysru.sru.edu/>)) and their prospective major's Curriculum Guide next to a Rock Studies Guide (<https://catalog.sru.edu/undergraduate/rock-studies/rock-studies-quick-guide/>) while they make course selections with their Academic Advisers (<https://catalog.sru.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/academic-advisers/>).

Students who are seeking to transfer (<https://www.sru.edu/admissions/transfer-and-military-admissions/>) to Slippery Rock, and have questions about how they might prepare for Rock Studies, should get in touch with the Admissions office (<https://www.sru.edu/admissions/transfer-and-military-admissions/>) for course suggestions and further guidance. As of Summer and Fall terms of 2021, transfer students will be enrolled in Rock Studies.

## Why the New Rock Studies?

A common desire expressed by students is that their learning has "relevance." They, very naturally, want to understand how what they learn relates to other knowledge they have and to their worlds.

The term we use for this process is "integration." The program's design encourages students to relate the learning they are doing among their courses, to "integrate" the knowledge and skills in one course with the learning in other courses and the world around them. The program will provide thematic interdisciplinary connections to guide students toward thinking critically and creatively, and to use knowledge from diverse places as they confront and analyze issues and problems.

In the process students will learn to synthesize their skills and knowledge in familiar areas with the learning in new areas. The ability to connect the known to the new is how new learning can be made relevant.

This does not mean that a course's relevance will always be understood in the first days or weeks of a course. The program always, however, works towards the goal of integrating cognitive aspects of learning with

students' personal and professional lives. We hope that what it teaches will endure far beyond graduation as students learn to make sense of new and complex situations all of us encounter throughout our lives. Educating students to be life-long learners is part of the mission of Slippery Rock University.

The program described in these pages asks students to integrate their learning in a number of ways. Interdisciplinary learning is one kind of integration that starts during the first term, in the University Seminar. But integration is more than just connecting disciplines. Integration will occur across broad disciplinary categories and between basic skills courses and advanced courses. Learning will be enriched by high impact experiences and opportunities for experiential learning and community engagement, all of which encourage and enable holistic integration.

## Liberal Studies or Rock Studies?

SRU is changing from an older general education program, the Liberal Studies Program, to a new one, the Rock Integrated Studies Program. This page explains which students follow which program.

The following students will follow Rock Studies:

- All first-year university students, freshmen, who matriculate to University in the Summer and Fall terms of 2019 and after will enter under Rock Studies. This includes students who may be entering the University for the first time with a few college-level credits.
- All students who are undergraduate readmissions (<https://www.sru.edu/admissions/other-admissions/>) will enter under Rock Studies beginning in the Fall term of 2019. According to readmission procedure (<https://www.sru.edu/academics/academic-services/readmission/>), "Readmitted students are responsible for meeting all academic requirements in effect at the time they are readmitted, not at the time they were originally admitted to the university."

The following students will remain in Liberal Studies:

- Students who entered SRU before Fall, 2018 will use the Liberal Studies Guide current at the year they entered the University (contact your Adviser for information)
- Students who entered in the Fall of 2018, Winter of 2018, or Spring of 2019 will use the most recent Liberal Studies Guide (<https://www.sru.edu/Documents/programs/curriculumguides/liberalstudiesguide.pdf/>).
- All new transfer students (<https://www.sru.edu/admissions/transfer-and-military-admissions/>) beginning Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 will enter under Rock Studies.

Because current students are following two different programs, each major will for a while need two different curriculum guides: one with the older LSP choices in the left column, and a new one with the RISP choices. Please use the index of Majors and Minors (<https://www.sru.edu/academics/majors-and-minors/#showMinors=false&view=expanded&page=1>) to find the Guides. Both Curriculum Guides are attached to each degree's "Major Requirements" page.

The program under which you enter is the program that you will follow through to graduation. Students may not transfer between the two programs.