GALLATIN SCHOOL OF INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY

A History
The School is named after one of the founders of NYU, Albert Gallatin, who served as secretary of the treasury under Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Gallatin held the iconoclastic view that a university should not be an elitist institution to train ministers and the sons of the aristocracy, as was the common purpose of colleges of the day. He believed New York City needed a college that would serve a varied urban population and the children of immigrants and artisans. It was to be a school that would “elevate the standard of learning and . . . render knowledge more accessible to the community at large.” In 1831, Gallatin’s dream was realized, and New York University was founded.

Just as in the 19th century, the late 20th century called for new innovations in higher education. Many people felt that traditional undergraduate programs were creating students who were passive consumers of knowledge. In 1972, NYU responded by founding an experimental program called the University Without Walls (UWW). The UWW experiment—renamed the Gallatin Division in 1976—encouraged students to create their own individualized studies, work closely with faculty, initiate unique projects and experiment with different areas of knowledge across the disciplines and professions.

Over the next three decades, this experiment developed into a finely tuned educational approach that has acquired a national reputation for its unique combination of flexibility and high standards. The Gallatin School of Individualized Study gained official school status at NYU in 1995 and has graduated more than 9,800 students with bachelor’s and master’s degrees. The Gallatin School boasts an excellent core faculty of committed teacher-advisers, as well as a distinguished group of faculty advisers from all over NYU and artists and scholars from around New York City.

Mission
The Gallatin School of Individualized Study provides a distinctive liberal arts education for a diverse student body. Our faculty foster passionate intellectual commitments from learners and prepare them for a world in which managing knowledge is key to success. Guided by the philosophy that self-directed learning is the key goal, the faculty seek to cultivate an environment conducive to intellectual exploration across traditional academic disciplines, and they insist on active student engagement in developing the direction of their own education. Our highly specialized and deeply engaged advisers guide students in their intellectual explorations toward an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving.

Notice: The policies, requirements, course offerings, schedules, activities, tuition, fees and calendar of the school and its programs set forth in this bulletin are subject to change without notice at any time at the sole discretion of the administration. Such changes may be of any nature, including, but not limited to, the elimination of the school, programs, classes or activities; the relocation of or modification of the content of any of the foregoing; and the cancellation of scheduled classes or other academic activities.

Payment of tuition or attendance at any classes shall constitute a student’s acceptance of the administration’s rights as set forth in the above paragraph.

Students at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study work closely with faculty advisers to forge their intellectual interests into a rigorous liberal arts education. They develop their own programs of study by combining Gallatin’s core curriculum of small, stimulating interdisciplinary seminars and workshops with courses in other NYU schools. Additionally, students are given the opportunity to pursue independent studies (one-on-one projects with faculty), tutorials (small group projects), private lessons, and internships.

Conveniently situated within the heart of New York City, Gallatin provides a variety of ways in which students can use the city as they develop their capacities for critical thinking, effective communication, and creative work. Undergraduate students experience a flexible but rigorous education, culminating in a final oral exam, called the colloquium, in which students demonstrate their knowledge about a select number of significant texts.

With just over 1,500 undergraduate students and approximately 150 graduate students, Gallatin enjoys the benefits of being a relatively small school housed within a major research university. Gallatin’s faculty is renowned for their excellence in teaching, research, and advising, and students additionally have access to a number of outstanding faculty in other NYU schools.

Programs
- Individualized Major (BA) (https://bulletins.nyu.edu/undergraduate/individualized-study/programs/individualized-major-ba/)
- Psychoanalysis and the Humanities (Minor) (https://bulletins.nyu.edu/undergraduate/individualized-study/programs/psychoanalysis-humanities-minor/)

Faculty
A
Ashley Agbasoga
Assistant Professor Faculty/Fellow
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Peder Anker
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Sinan Antoon
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic), Harvard University

Elaine Ayers
Visiting Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Princeton University

B
Gianpaolo Baiocchi
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Doctorate (Academic)

Puneet Bhasin
Assistant Professor Faculty/Fellow
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Brown University

Harold Brooks
Visiting Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Bachelor's Level Degree, Brooklyn College

David Brooks
Clinical Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), Columbia University

Raven Brown
Assistant Professor Faculty/Fellow
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Ernest Bryant
Clinical Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), School of Visual Arts

Paula Chakravarty
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Ngina Chiteji
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Kwami Coleman
Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Sybil Cooksey
Clinical Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Nina Cornyetz
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Marie Cruz Soto
Clinical Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Kimberly Dacosta
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Subah Dayal
Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of California-Los Angeles

Anne Dewitt
Clinical Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Michael Dinwiddie
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), New York University

Stephen Duncombe
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Gregory Erickson
Clinical Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Valerie Forman
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Hallie Franks
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Rosalind Fredericks
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Andrea Gadberry
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Meira Gold
Assistant Professor Faculty/Fellow
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of Cambridge

Lisa Goldfarb
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic), CUNY Graduate School and University Center

Hannah Gurman
Clinical Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethan Harkness</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctorate (Academic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Harpman</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>School of Individualized Study</td>
<td>Master of Architecture (M.Arch.), Yale University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Hornick</td>
<td>Clinical Associate Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Columbia University in the City of New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristin Horton</td>
<td>Clinical Associate Professor</td>
<td>School of Individualized Study</td>
<td>Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), University of Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitchell Joachim</td>
<td>Clinical Associate Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nina Katchadourian</td>
<td>Clinical Professor</td>
<td>School of Individualized Study</td>
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<td>Patricia Kim</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>School of Individualized Study</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Eugenia Kisin</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctorate (Academic), New York University</td>
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<td>Bradley Lewis</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>Doctorate (Academic)</td>
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<td>Ritty Lukose</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>Julie Malnig</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized Study</td>
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<td>Patrick McCreery</td>
<td>Clinical Assistant Professor</td>
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<td>Bella Mirabella</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>Ali Mirsepassi</td>
<td>Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Murphy</td>
<td>Clinical Associate Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), New York University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernadette Myers</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Faculty/Fellow</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Columbia University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vasuki Nesiah</td>
<td>Clinical Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctorate (Professional)</td>
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<td>Stacy Pies</td>
<td>Clinical Associate Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctorate (Academic)</td>
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<td>Todd Porterfield</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctorate (Academic), Boston University</td>
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<td>Myisha Priest</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Gallatin School of Individualized</td>
<td>Doctorate (Academic)</td>
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<td>Jacob Remes</td>
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Andrew Romig
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Duke University

Sophia Roosth
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Victoria Rosner
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Laura Slatkin
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

David Spielman
Visiting Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Master of Arts (M.A.), University of California-Los Angeles

Matthew Stanley
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Alejandro Velasco
Associate Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Duke University

Eugene Vydrin
Clinical Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Lauren Walsh
Visiting Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Jerome Whittington
Clinical Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of California-Berkeley

Susanne Wofford
Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctorate (Academic)

Duncan Yoon
Assistant Professor
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of California-Los Angeles