

IDS 3150.101 INTERDISCIPLINARY PRAXIS

Spring 2006

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Office Hours: TR 8:30-9:15; 10:45-11:30; and by appointment

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Course Description:

This course provides an overview of interdisciplinary praxis by means of selected readings in theories and philosophies of interdisciplinarity and in interdisciplinary practices. It entails both broad investigation of interdisciplinarity as well as application to students' concentrations and to the portfolio each IDS major must complete for graduation. The course will introduce the concepts and requirements for the portfolio and assist students in preparing a plan to satisfy the portfolio requirement.

Objectives:

By the end of the semester, each student will:

1. Have a better historical, conceptual, and practical understanding of his/her own concentration.
2. Understand and apply concepts necessary for the thoughtful practice of interdisciplinarity, through discussion of theories of interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, method, media, collaboration, etc.
3. Know the requirements for the IDS Major Portfolio and the process by which each requirement will be completed and approved, devise a plan for completing the portfolio over the course of her or his time as a major, and submit a partial portfolio for faculty and student review.

Texts:

Hacker, Diana, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 4th Ed. Available in the Scholar's Bookshop as well as the paperback section of the bookstore, or on Amazon.

A variety of readings available through electronic reserve, or as a photocopied packet available for purchase from Precision Printing on Highway 321.

Additional web resources.

Requirements and evaluation:

Participation 10%

Assignments 90% (20% for each for assignments 1-4; 10% for assignment 5). The due dates are noted in the calendar. Be aware that **late work will be penalized**, with Assignments losing one grade increment for each class period that they are late. **Turn work in on time!**

Participation: Active participation in this as in any class contributes directly to your understanding of the material as well as to that of your colleagues. Punctual and regular attendance is thus a minimal requirement. Additionally each of you is expected to engage in class discussions by contributing ideas, questions, and responses to the ideas and questions of others. You should come to each class prepared with questions and comments about the assigned readings, your research, and your thoughts with respect to your concentration in particular and interdisciplinarity in general. Obviously when you are absent, your participation grade will start sliding down, so plan to attend every class on time and be prepared to make an active contribution. As an inducement for perfect attendance, you will receive a grade bonus of one increment (e.g., a B will become a B+) for your course grade to reward perfect attendance, no absences, no tardies. Likewise, excessive absences will be penalized by one or more grade increments.

Assignments Overview (more detailed instructions available on line through the class web page):

Assignments 1 and 2: Understanding your concentration. While the components are due separately, work on them together so that you are prepared to develop an accurately documented paper for Assignment 2. Assignment 1A is a statement of purpose and proposed curriculum for your concentration; 1B lists and describes resources for interdisciplinary praxis relevant to your concentration. Assignment 2 will be a 4-6 page documented research paper on the history of your concentration as an academic field of study.

Assignment 3: A collaborative assignment, done in interdisciplinary small groups, that results in a "performance" of an interdisciplinary issue of local concern about actual needs ("performance" may be defined as broadly as you wish, but must include two or more media not dependent on writing: dance, music, clay, print-making, film or video, paint, charcoal, performance art, non-text capacities of computers, etc.). The group must present the performance to the class and turn in a brief written explanation of their performance. In addition, each student must write a brief reflection on the process of collaboration.

Assignment 4: An analytic paper in which you reflect upon the concept of interdisciplinarity in terms of class readings and discussion, documented correctly, as well as your own concentration.

Assignment 5: Portfolio to date as well as a completed Portfolio Plan to accompany the presentation of the beginnings of your Major Concentration Portfolio on Portfolio Review Day (Reading Day) for review by you concentration advisor or other faculty. You will not have a complete portfolio at this time, but you should have some elements of the final portfolio ready as well as the Portfolio Plan for completing and turning in the Portfolio during Senior Seminar.

All conduct, both faculty and student, in this class will be governed by the Appalachian State University Code of Academic Integrity.

Course Calendar and Reading Assignments (most available through electronic reserves):

Week 1 (01/10-12)

01/10 Introductions, procedures, and policies.

01/12 Beginning of work on clarifying your concentration for yourself. Bring to class for review your concentration check sheet (available on line if you do not have one at <http://www.cas.appstate.edu/checksheets/>) and begin scouring the Appalachian State University Undergraduate Bulletin for courses that you want to select from the check sheet (remember that substitutions are available if there are other courses that fit what you want and meet the spirit of the requirement). Make notes so that you will have materials for Assignment 1, parts A and B.

Discussion of your interdisciplines. Venn diagram exercise.

Week 2 (01/17-19) Schedule a meeting for this week with concentration advisor to begin working with Assignment 1A (see below).

01/17 Detailed review of requirements for Assignments 1 and 2. Go to the "Lecture Notes" section of the class web page to find the requirements and print them out and bring to class for discussion/questions.

Note—on this day only, class begins at 10:00 AM.

01/19 Workshop to review and develop 1 A, a) Statement of Purpose, b) Curriculum List, c) Practicum/Travel Opportunities.

Week 3 (01/24-26)

01/24 Interdisciplinarity and/as/through Academic Institutions; Lattuca and Voigt, "Interdisciplinary Courses and Majors in Higher Education." Plus What Constitutes Interdisciplinary Work? J. Klein, "An Interdisciplinary Lexicon"

01/26 Histories of (Inter) disciplines, with Latin American Studies as a model, exercise to illustrate issues in histories of inter/disciplines.

Week 4 (01/31-02/02)

01/31 Library on Tuesday January 31. Researching interdisciplinary resources and histories of concentrations. Review library web site of interdisciplinary resources at <http://www.appstate.edu/~vilesea/ids3150.htm>

Interdisciplinary resources In/ and Outside the Academy. Review Assignments 1 and 2. Review IDS website <http://www.ids.appstate.edu> as well as the IDS Links page which has interesting resource links <http://www.ids.appstate.edu/links.html>.

02/02 Discussion of possibilities for your work for Assignment 2.

Week 5 (02/07-09) Conferences begin with completed draft, properly documented, of Assignment 2 paper (sign up on sheet to be passed around in class).

02/07 Assignment 1A (all three parts) due 2/07. Prior to completing that you need to meet with your academic advisor and/or concentration advisor for their feedback on a draft of your statement of purpose and proposed curriculum. Introduction to the IDS Portfolio. Review Portfolio Guidelines, Portfolio Requirements and Portfolio Signature Sheet (Available online). Group formation and work on Assignment 2 B. Remember that this is about a history of the study of your area, not the area itself (e.g., a history of the *study* of Latin America, not a history of Latin America).

02/09 Performing Interdisciplinarity: ACT UP and the Zapatistas. "A Short History of Radical Renewal," "Stepping Off the Sidewalk," and "The Vision Thing" from Shepard and Hayduk

Week 6 (02/14-16)

02/14 Assignment 1B, a and b, due 02/14, interdisciplinary resources and matrices of meaning. More group project work.

02/16 Group oral presentations Assignment 2 B (dates to be drawn). Assignment 2 due 02/21.

Week 7 (02/21-23)

02/21 Group oral presentations Assignment 2 B.

02/23 Begin discussion of Theories of Interdisciplinarity: Newell, "A Theory of Interdisciplinary Studies."

Week 8 (02/28-03/02)

02/28 Carp, "Integrative Praxes."

03/01 Interdisciplinary Theories of Disciplines: J. Klein, "Blurring, Cracking, and Crossing: Permeation and the Fracturing of Discipline."

Week 9 (03/07-09)

03/07 Theories of Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity: Fish, "Being Interdisciplinary is So Very Hard to Do,"

03/09 Transdisciplinarity: J. Klein, "Notes Toward a Social Epistemology of Transdisciplinarity," available at <http://perso.club-internet.fr/nicol/ciret/bulletin/b12/b12c2.htm> (only the first paragraph is in French, keep reading).

Week 10 (03/21-23)

03/21 Collaboration and/as Interdisciplinarity: Kiester, "A Town Buries the Axe"

03/23 Media and Interdisciplinary Praxis: Carp, "Intermediation"

Week 11 (03/28-30) Begin group work on presentations for Assignment 3, Collaborative Work on a Problem of Local Significance.

Week 12 (04/04-06) Begin optional conferences on completed drafts, properly documented, of Assignment 4 (sign up sheet to come). Performing Interdisciplinarity: Group presentations of Assignment 3 (dates to be drawn). A one page written explanation of the group's performance (including details on how it uses alternative media) due the day of that group's presentation. Additionally, each student turns in a 2-3 page reflection on the interdisciplinary praxis of either collaboration or alternative media as experienced in this project, due the class period after the group's presentation.

Week 13 (04/11-13)

04/11 Method and Interdisciplinarity: Does what we study define how we study it? Does how we study it define what we study? What is the relation between knowledge and the techniques by which it is produced? What do/can we know? Discussion based on review of earlier readings.

04/13 Workshop on organizing the portfolio; Assignment 4, analytic paper defining interdisciplinarity, citing articles we have read in the class, due.

Week 14 (04/20-25) Portfolio development workshops. Review and reflections on issues discussed over the semester.

Portfolio Review Day, Reading Day April 27; 11:00 AM-Noon, The Great Hall

Assignment 5 due, Portfolio and Portfolio Plan on 04/27, at 11:00 AM

Final Experience, Wednesday May 3, Noon – 2:30 PM